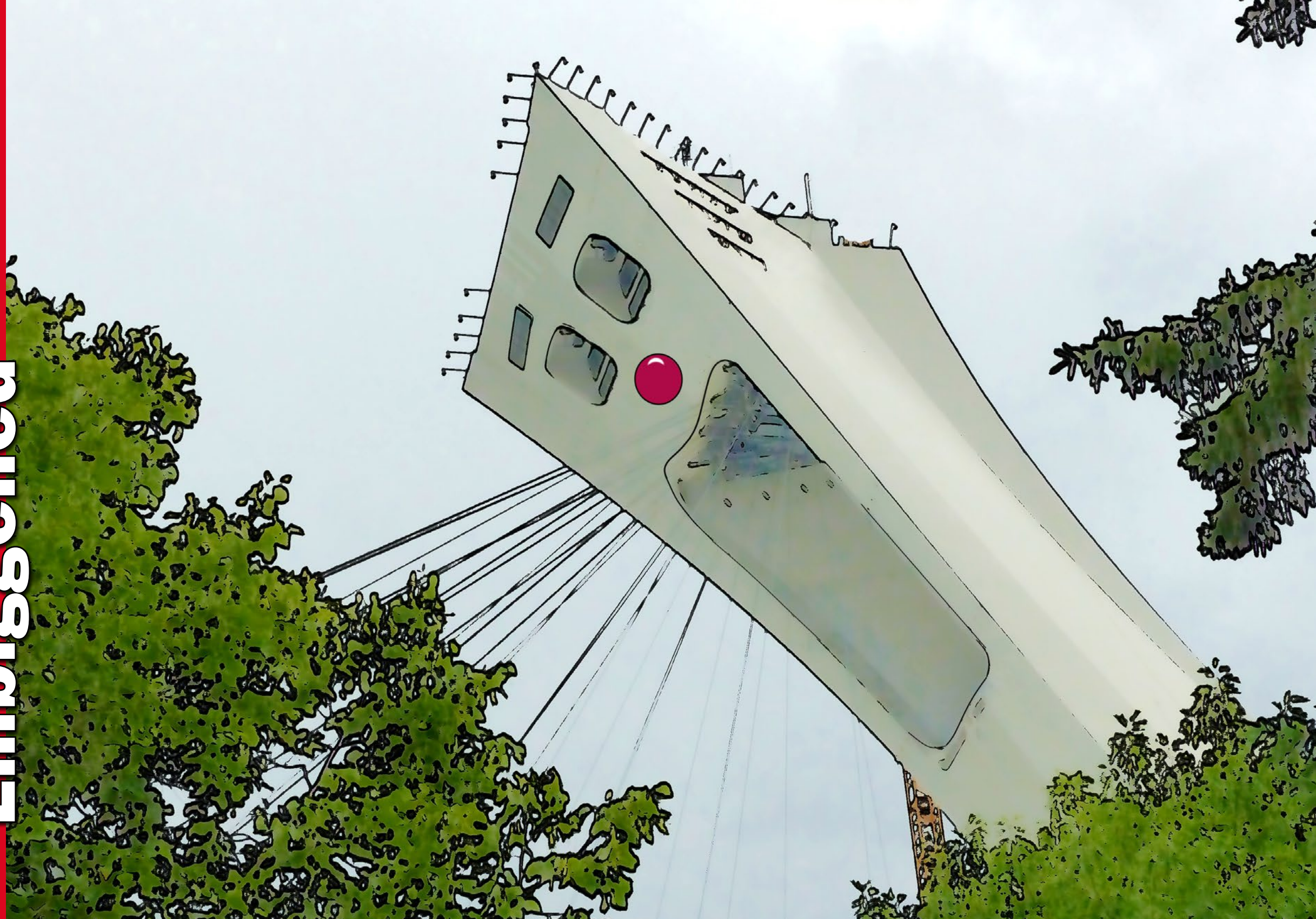


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Chess Canada

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CCN is distributed by email to CFC members who have submitted their email address to the CFC:

admin@chess.ca

submissions

CCN is looking for contributions: tournament reports, photos, annotated games. For examples, see this issue or read the 2013.06 Appendix for other ideas.

suggestions

If you have an idea for a story you would like to write, email me:

cfc_newsletter_editor@chess.ca

- John Upper
editor

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David Cummings: Interview
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Critical Positions 3

Cover: Big O Face

Sometimes you just have to laugh.

Annotations by...

- **IM David Cummings**
- **IM Michael Kleinman**
- **FM John Doknjas**

Next...

- **GM Aman Hambleton**
"GM... by a whisker"
- **IM Shiyam Thavandiran**
I'M IM



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Critical Positions



selected by the editor

3

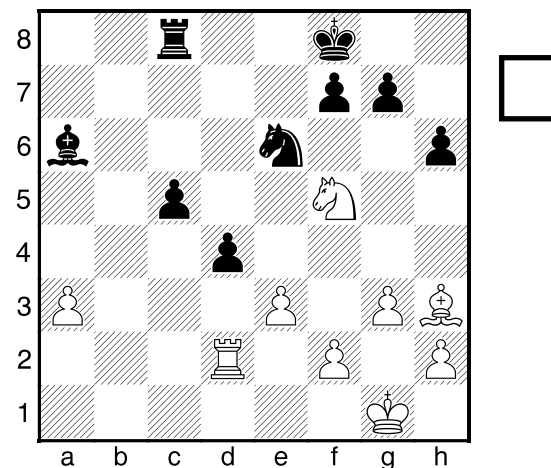
The following diagrams are critical positions from this issue of *Chess Canada*. You can treat them as exercises or as a teaser introduction to what you'll find this month.

These "critical positions" can be:

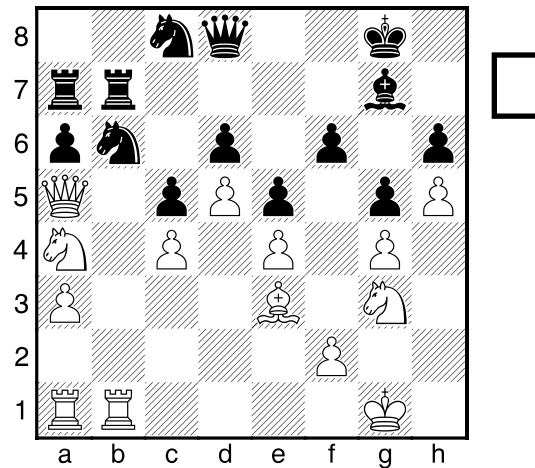
- winning combinations
- surprising tactics
- endgames requiring precise play
- simple calculation exercises
- variation-rich middlegames
- moments when one player went badly wrong.

The  and  squares next to each diagram indicate the player to move.

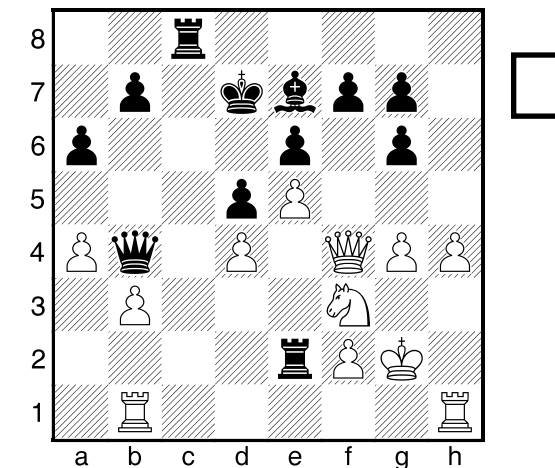
Solutions appear in the game analysis in this month's CCN, *in the red diagrams* in the reports named under the diagram. Critical positions usually feature significantly more analytical commentary than the rest of the game.



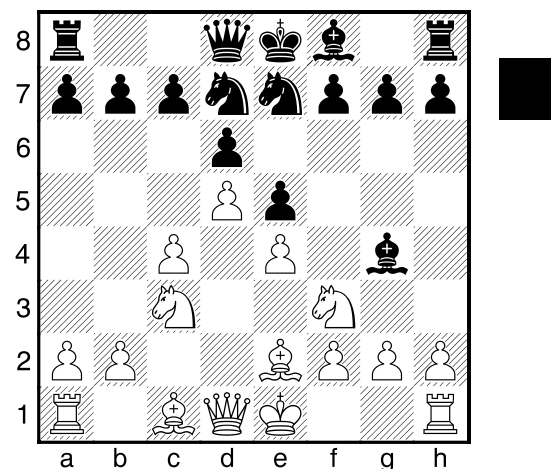
see: Cummings



see: Cummings

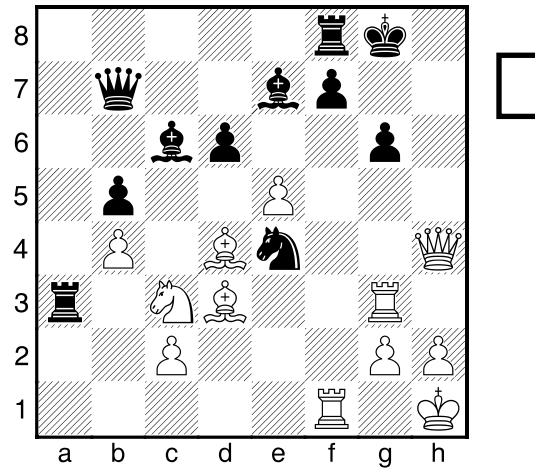


attack or defend?
see: Kleinman

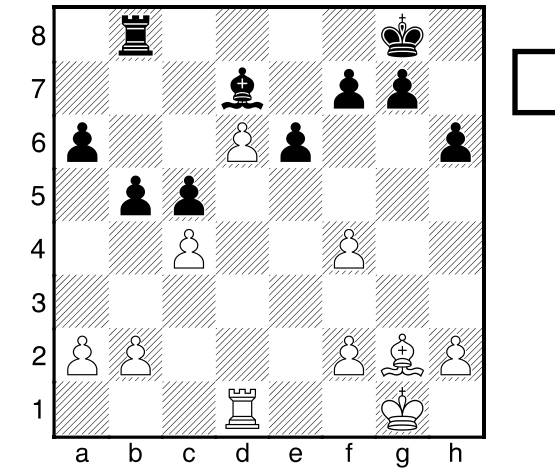


KID-style with ...g6 or something else?

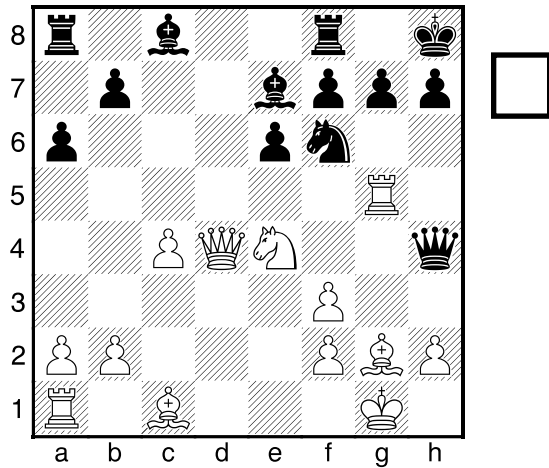
see: Cummings



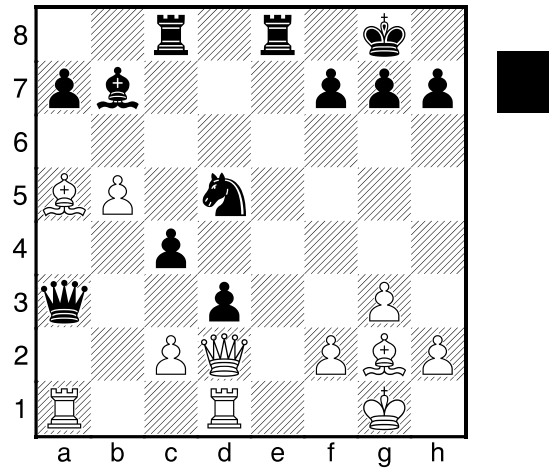
see: Kleinman



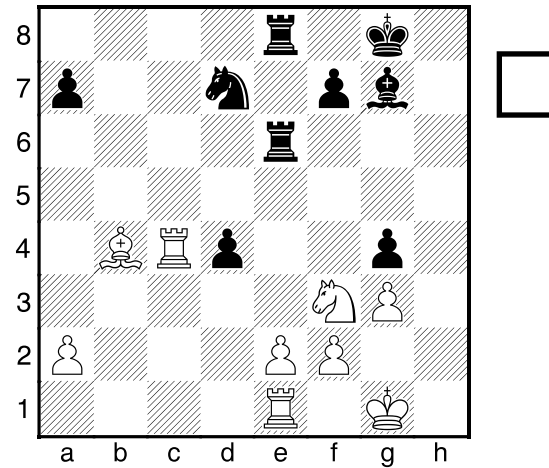
see: Kleinman



see: Kleinman

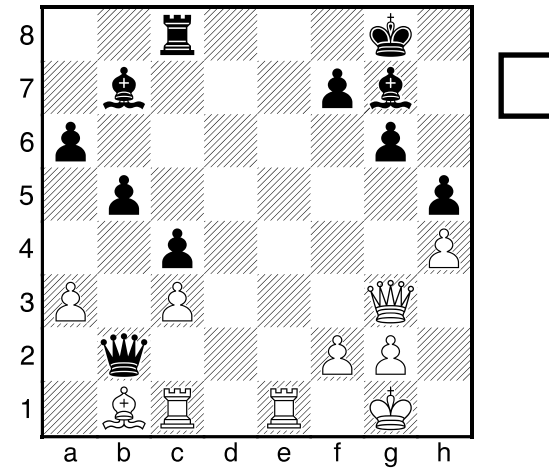


see: Zonal

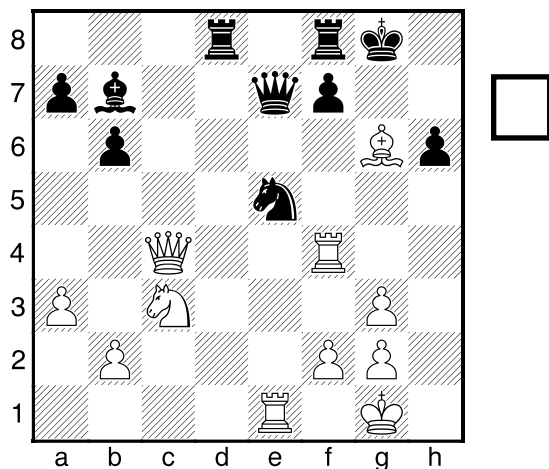


Can White now play ♖xd4?

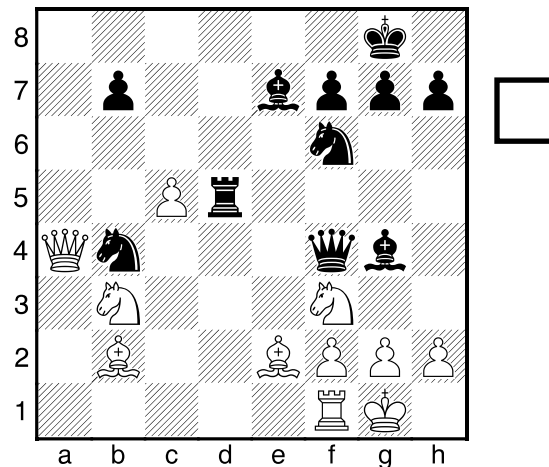
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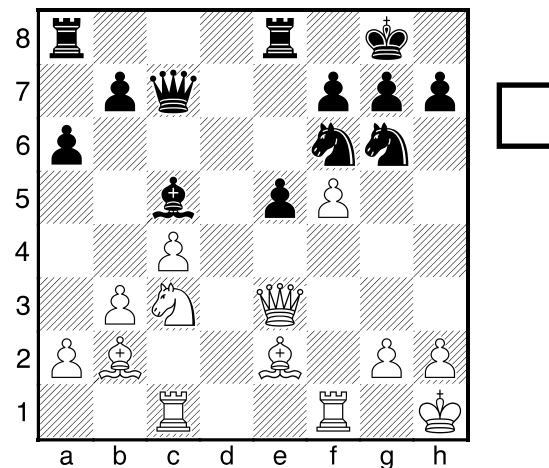
see: Zonal



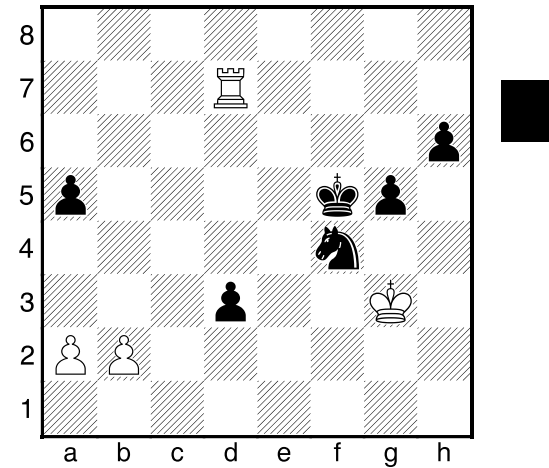
see: Kleinman



see: Zonal

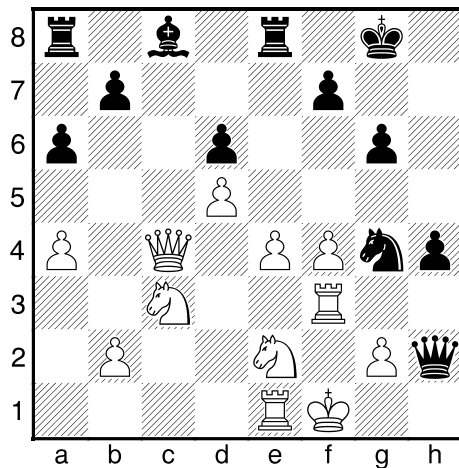


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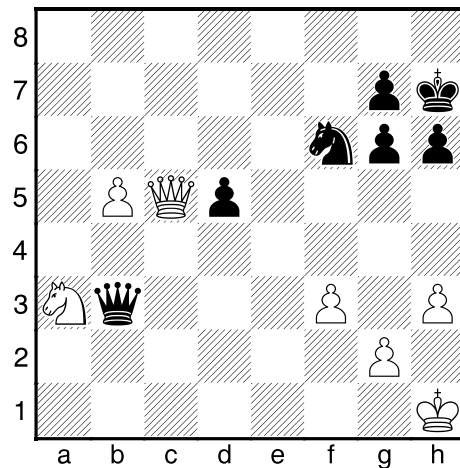


Pretend this is an endgame study...

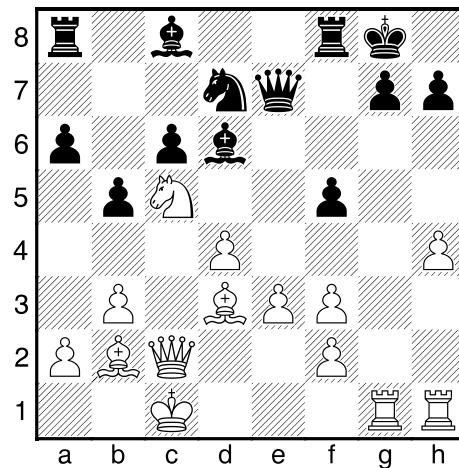
see: Zonal



see: Sault

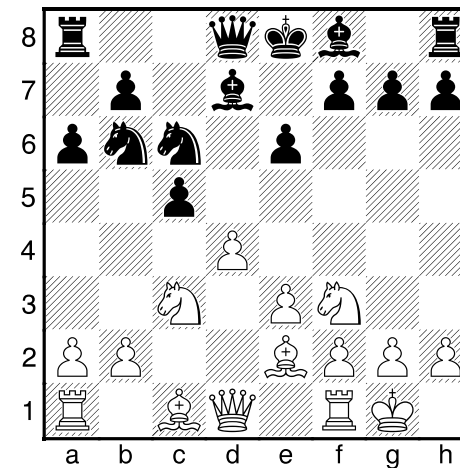


see: Sault

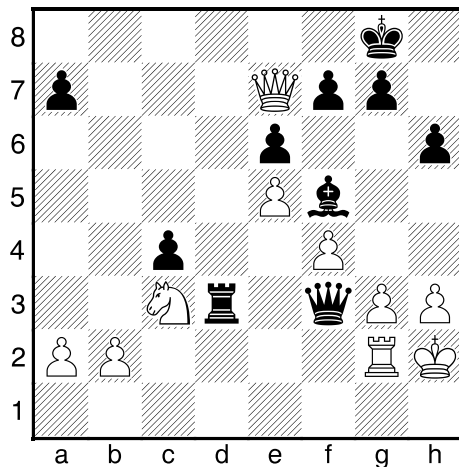


Up a pawn, with better development and g-file pressure.. who could ask for more?

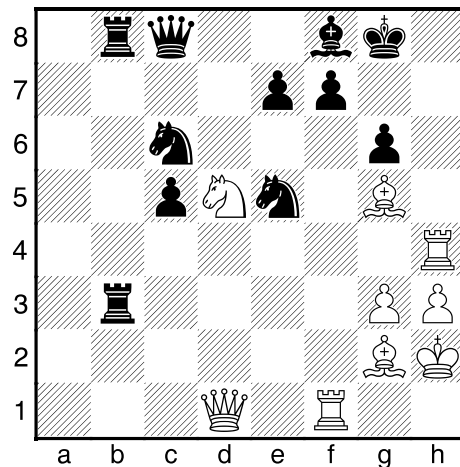
see: Appendix



see: Appendix

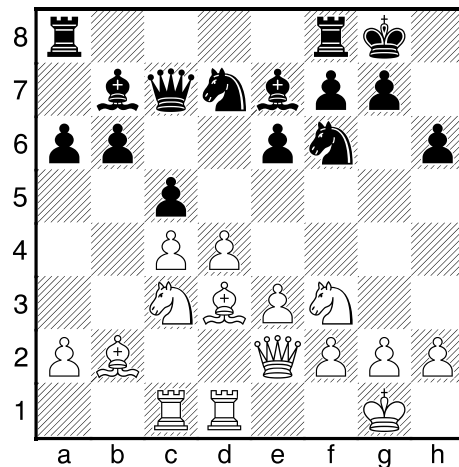


see: Sault



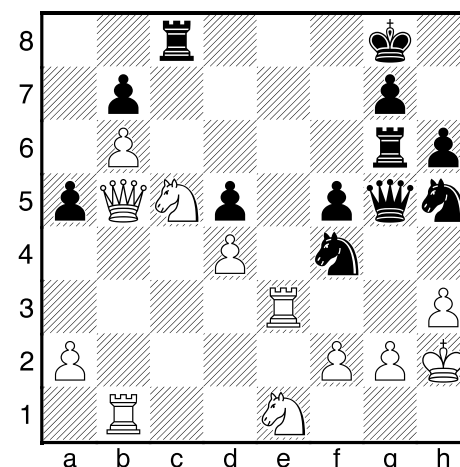
What happens after 31...♖b1?

see: Sault

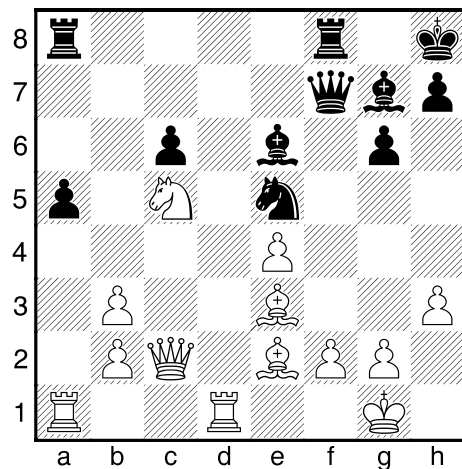


What happens on 14.d5!?

see: Appendix

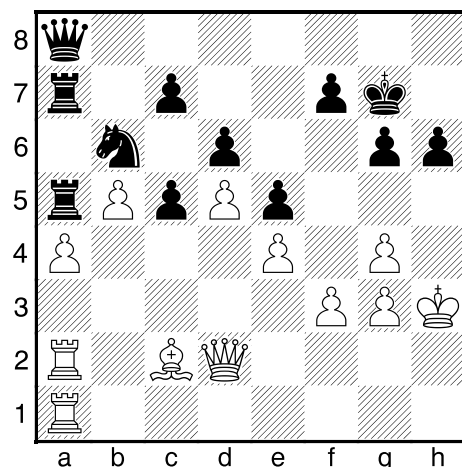


see: Appendix



What happens on 25... ♔xh6!?

see: Appendix



Black has maximum pressure on a4, and has ...♖xb5. Is White doomed?

see: Appendix

Booking Up

The two longest articles in this issue of *Chess Canada* are about chess books: writing them, learning from them, and reviewing them.

The trigger for this was **David Cummings' the English** (Everyman, 2016). It's a Canadian-authored chess book and I report on Canadian chess, so of course I'd review it... but not in the usual way.

The typical chess book review is a thin description of the table of contents. *Some* may be relied upon to warn you that a stray chapter has been printed upside-down and in Portuguese, but don't bet on it.

Rather than that, I decided I would study Cummings' book and then **play the repertoire in all my games** and then report on how it went. That's the Appendix.

The remainder of this editor's note discusses three problems with that approach... in *addition* to the well-known shortage of labour-intensive guineapigs.

Expectations

If the opening position of chess is a draw, then what can one reasonably expect of a sound opening repertoire? *Objectively*: the better side of a drawn endgame? *Subjectively*: a position *you* like *more* than your opponent likes. The former is uninspiring, and the latter will depend more on the players than the Rep.

If a reviewer spends all of an hour nowadays reading the book he is supposed to be reviewing, he feels that he has done more than his duty. This is particularly unfortunate in the field of chess, in which it often requires years to write a good book.

- Fred Reinfeld, *Chess Review*, March 1951.

Causation/Correlation

How did the Rep affect the games? All of my middlegames were *shaped* by the openings, but how much did that contribute to the results? My opponents' time trouble *may* have been increased by their unfamiliarity with the DC Rep, but I can't know that without access to their other games and time stats.

Beyond Results

Finally, the Appendix is entirely about **results**: did this Rep help me win games? But there is another way to look at an opening book, and that is as a way to help understand and enjoy the games of the world's top players. If your interest in chess extends beyond the Italian Game, or the English Attack against the Sicilian, then a book like this can expand your horizons and help you understand what Giri and Grischuk are up to.

Note: there are a few good English-language chess book reviewers:

- **John Watson's** discontinued TWIC online reviews;
- **Matthew Sadler's** *New in Chess* reviews, esp. when he is keen on a good book;
- *US Chess Life's* reviewer **John Hartmann**; whose reviews were excellent, but *sadly*, he seems to have been "promoted" to USCF online editor and stopped his reviews.

- John Upper

Reinfeld quote via Edward Winter:
<http://www.chesshistory.com/winter/extra/bookreviews.html>



Until very recently, **IM David Cummings** was the only Canadian whose opinions on chess openings were sought and published by the top-level English-language chess press like Everyman (books) and New in Chess (opening surveys to their Yearbooks) and *chesspublishing.com* (where he runs the “Flank Openings” section).

His most recent book is *The English*, (Everyman, 2016) a White repertoire based on lines with e3 rather than g3.

When David’s work brought him to Ottawa in July 2017, he played in the RA Chess Club Sunday Rapid tournament and met me for dinner, where we talked about his life as a chess player, and his life as a chess author and reader.

- editor

Getting Started

John Upper: Tell us about how you first got exposed to chess.

David Cummings: I was born in Canada of Welsh parents, but was brought up mainly in England.

My Dad taught me the moves when I was around 9 years old. I really took up the game around the age of 11-12 when I started at a Secondary school that had a strong chess team. This was in 1972-73, when there was also a huge upsurge in chess interest due to the Fischer-Spassky match.

What was your first, or one of your first, chess tournaments?

I started played in school team matches and local tournaments, then later in weekenders and national junior events. After a relatively late start (by today’s standards) I improved over the next few years and got into the top group of England juniors, for example winning the British U-16 Ch. in 1976.

What were some of your earliest ways to study chess?

I learned from studying books and playing a lot. My early favourite books were Bobby Fischer’s *My 60 Memorable Games* and *Modern Chess Openings*. Coaching wasn’t a big thing in the UK in the 1970s, I took some lessons with a local master for less than a year, but that was about it.

With Staunton and the international tournaments in London, England had an early bid to be a world chess leader in the mid-19th century; but it was more than 100 years later (in the late 1970s) before England had its first GM, but had about 10 in the next 10 years. Why do you suppose England started to produce a crop of strong young players around the time you

Spassky checked by Britain’s starlets

by Leonard Barden

BORIS SPASSKY, the chess legend who starred in an epic world title series with Bobby Fischer, won only 13 games out of 30 this weekend against England’s schoolboy squad in a seven-hour battle at Highbury Grove School.

Spassky, 41, now ranked third in the world, called the match “hard bread” as he conceded five losses and 12 draws. The top 10 juniors beat him 3-1 with six draws.

The former world champion said afterwards: “This was my toughest ever simultaneous. Until today I’ve never lost more than four games in an exhibition in my life. Many of these youngsters would be candidate masters in Russia. I wouldn’t take them on again for double the money.”

Spassky’s technique included a flick action as he moved pieces or took chessmen off the board. He drank only fresh orange juice and took periodic time-outs, a novelty in exhibition play.

Brilliant

Three times he waved his hands to indicate 10-minute breaks, left the room and then returned to sit in a chair and ponder his positions shown on a display board.

London’s leading schoolboy Julian Hodgson, 15, of St Paul’s, took 22 moves to rip open the Russian’s defences for a brilliant victory.

And Spassky took nearly four hours to overcome his youngest challenger, 10-year-old Neil Carr, of Barking, for his first win.

But in the second-half of the match, the audience saw a vintage Spassky power his way to several impressive victories. He was a knight down to David Cummings, of Brighton, in the last game to finish, but



STRETCHED—Spassky studies the scoreboard from a chair as competitors wait to continue the fight. Nigel Short, 13, who drew; Julian Hodgson, 15, a brilliant winner; Glenn Flear, David Cummings, and P. Watson.

turned the tables with a checkmate attack.

The match was sponsored by the Evening Standard with help from the National Bank of Dubai and the Slater Foundation, and it followed the presentation of prizes for the Evening Standard Junior Chess Congress.

RESULTS: Boris Spassky (USSR) won 13. His 12 draws were with N. Short

(Bolton), W. Watson (Barnes), N. Benjamin (Kew), D. King (Bromley), M. Peis (London Univ), G. Clark (Gatford), J. Pitcher (Stoke), T. Peterson (Finbury Park), K. Arkell (Rednal), S. Brown (Potts Wood), P. Sullivan (Gheam), P. Wells (Portsmouth).

He lost five to J. Hodgson (Shenbards, Epsom), G. Flear (Surrey Univ), R. Holmes (Richmond), N. Dickenson (Savenoaks), G. Lane (Painton) in seven hours.

Short, Hodgson, Flear, Cummings vs Boris Spassky



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were taking up the game?

I think it started simply with a few talented individual players, but built up over the course of the 1970s and 80s to produce a disproportionate number of titled players. I think the main factors in this growth were the sheer number of high quality tournament opportunities, a thriving chess literature scene, and targeted junior programs such as many simul with top GMs.

I found a photo of you playing Spassky. The paper said he was looking at the demo boards between moves.

And I was the only one concentrating on the game. Unfortunately, I lost. I was the last one to finish.

The paper said you were up a piece and you got mated....
[slowly] Yes...

It's memorable playing some of those guys. [Anatoly Karpov](#) was another, in a 10 board clock simul in 1977 against English juniors. The British Championship used to be played over two weeks, Monday to Satur-

day, and the middle Sunday was a rest day. So on the Saturday, I played [Nigel Short](#), and I beat him in fact. He was only 12 years old... [laughs]...

How old were you then?

16. It was still a big achievement at the time, because he was very much high-profile. He was on the national news.

Nigel was expected to be the West's Big Hope, even at that age.

In that tournament, he beat [Jonathan Penrose](#) — who is the 10-time [British] champion — earlier in the week.

It was in my hometown as well. And then on Sunday, we all went up to play Karpov. So, in that one weekend, I played Short and Karpov. [laughs]

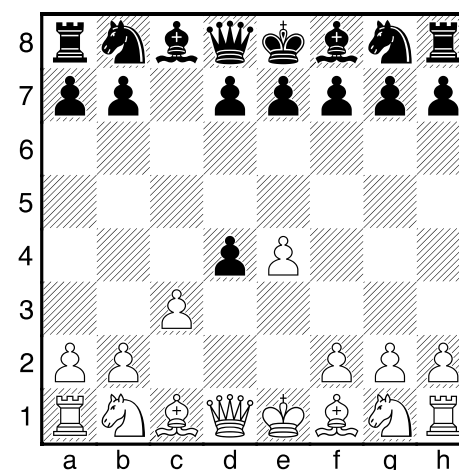


Short, Nigel D Cummings, David H B22

British CF-64 Championship
Brighton/ East Sussex (6),
13.08.1977

Notes: John Upper

1.e4 c5 2.d4 cxd4 3.c3



Nigel has since gone on record saying that the Morra is garbage.

3...♘f6

Black declines...

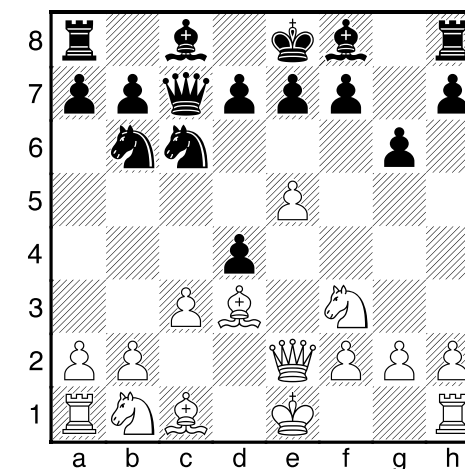
The next day, Karpov accepted in his simul game against Short:
3...dxc3 4.♘xc3 ♘c6 5.♘f3
e6 6.♙c4 a6 7.a3 b5 8.♙a2
b4 9.axb4 ♙xb4 10.0-0 (0-1,

Karpov simul

low rez screencap

59) [Short,N-Karpov,A](#) (2690)
London (Lloyds Bank simul),
1977.

4.e5 ♘d5 5.♙c4 ♙c7 6.♙e2
♘b6 7.♙d3 ♘c6 8.♘f3 g6



9.0-0

9.cxd4?? ♘xd4 10.♘xd4 ♙xc1+
+.

9...dxc3?!

9...♙g7! 10.cxd4 d6=.

10.♘xc3 ♙g7 11.♘b5

But White insists on sac'ing.

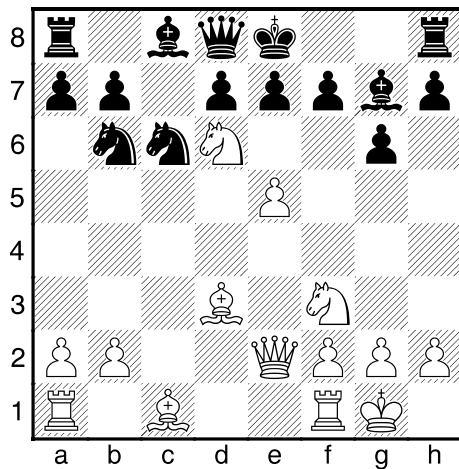
♙11.a4! a5 (11...♘xe5?

12.a5+-) 12.♙f4 0-0 13.♙fd1±

with very good Morra Gambit compensation in central pressure and with Black having a difficult time finding a place for the ♙.

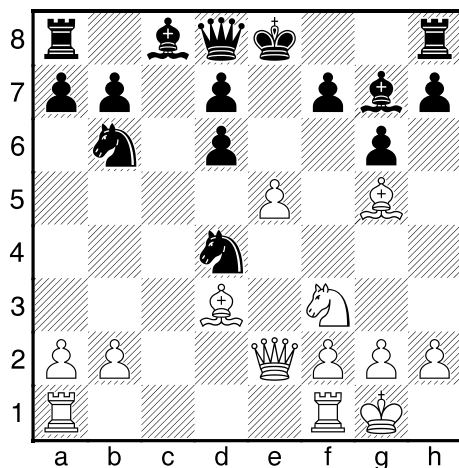


11...♔d8 12.♘d6+!?



12...exd6 13.♙g5!?
13.exd6+ ♔f8 14.♖e1 h6.

13...♘d4□



14.♘xd4?

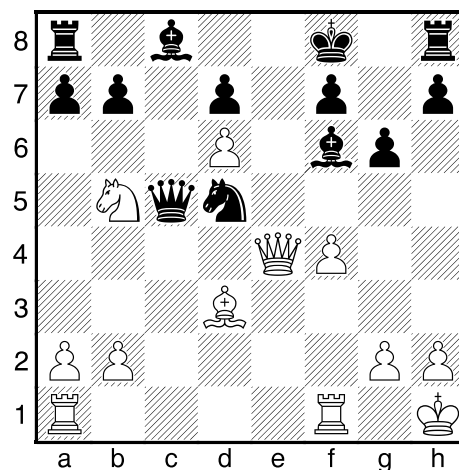
14.♙d2! ♘xf3+? (14...f6! 15.exf6
♙xf6 16.♘xd4 ♙xg5∞) 15.gxf3
f6 (15...♙c7? 16.exd6 ♙xd6
17.♖fe1+ ♔f8 18.♙e7+-) 16.exf6

♙xf6 17.♖fe1+ ♔f7 18.♙xf6!
♙xf6 19.♖e4+- g5 (19...♘d5?
20.♙c4+-) 20.♖ae1+- White
is down a piece, but Black is
playing without the ♖c8 and ♙c8,
and White can play to open more
files around the Black ♔ with f4
and/or h4.

14...♙xg5 15.exd6+ ♔f8!
16.♘b5 ♙f6!

Makes a space on g7 for the ♔.

17.f4 ♙c5+ 18.♔h1 ♘d5!
19.♙e4

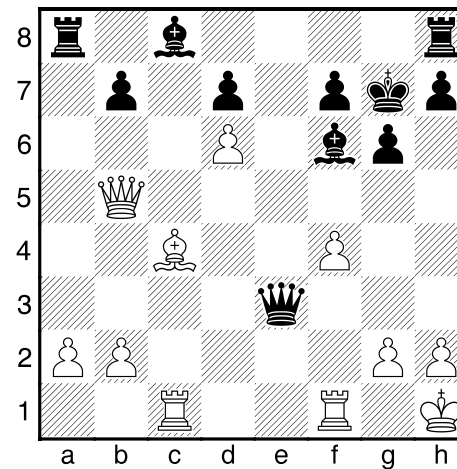


19...a6!

If the d6 pawn drops then Black's
♙c8 will get in the game and
White will have nothing for the
piece sac.

20.♖ac1 ♙e3! 21.♙xd5 axb5

22.♙xb5 ♔g7 23.♙c4



23...♖f8!

A good no-nonsense move
to suck the air out of White's
remaining hopes.

24.♙d5 ♙d4 25.b4 ♖a6!
26.♖fd1 ♖b6 27.♙e2 ♙xb4
28.f5 ♖xd6 29.fxg6 hxg6

0-1

Karpov Simul

*What happened in the Karpov
simul?*

He got 9½ out of 10.

Who drew?

That was a guy who gave up
chess, he's actually the older

brother of Simon Williams, Tony
Williams.

It was a very memorable
thing. Karpov wrote a little piece
about each game, he wrote that
“*Cummings played one or two
interesting moves and wouldn't
have lost from the mistake on
move 36*”. So it was it was a good
experience of playing.

*Did Karpov and the players have
the same amount of time?*

I think so, but that was like 40
years ago, and honestly I can't
remember. But he moved so
fast. He was at the peak. He was
so confident.

*He was also known for moving
very fast [in OTB games].*

Yeah, he was just... graceful, and
he was so quick and he didn't
even get into time trouble as I
remember.

*Who were some of the other
players there?*

In that 10, there was Nigel, Ju-
lian, me, William Watson, Dan-
iel King, this guy that drew, Tony
Williams, and then... one or
two others that became FMs or
didn't continue.



Was Michael Stean there?

No, he was the older generation. He was seconding Kortchnoi at that time. In the older generation, there was Keene, Hartson, and then Stean, and then a little bit younger was Speelman, Nunn, Mestel. And then we were the kids... We might only have been six or seven years younger at the time...

...at that age it's half your life.

First English GMs

- 1976 Miles, Anthony
- Keene, Raymond D
- 1977 Stean, Michael
- 1978 Nunn, John DM
- 1980 Speelman, Jonathan
- 1982 Mestel, A Jonathan
- 1983 Chandler, Murray
- 1984 Short, Nigel D
- 1985 Plaskett, H James
- 1985 Golombek Harry (honourary)
- 1987 Flear, Glenn

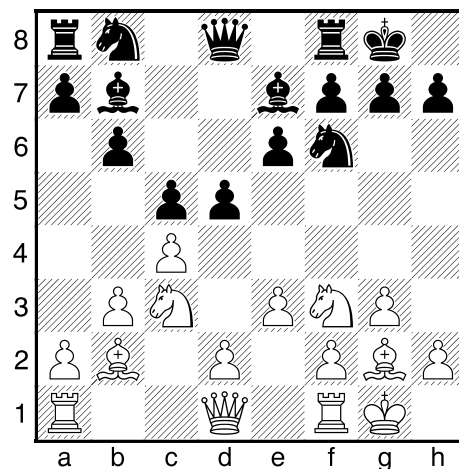
Cummings, David H Karpov, Anatoly

A14

*Karpov clock simul v ENG U17
London (Lloyds Bank) (1.3),
14.08.1977*

Notes: John Upper

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 b6 3.g3 ♘b7
4.♙g2 e6 5.0-0 ♙e7 6.b3 0-0
7.♙b2 d5 8.e3 c5 9.♘c3



It is notable that Karpov played both White *and* Black in this simul.

9...♘c6

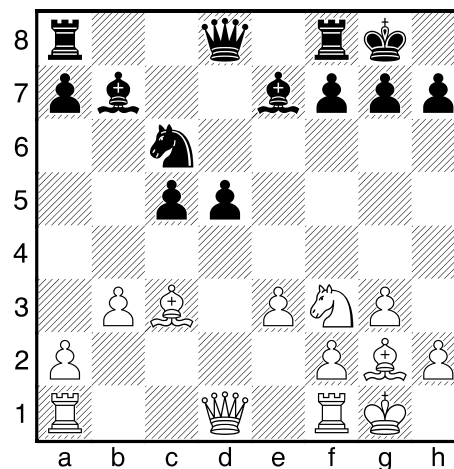
The previous year, English GM Michael Stean held Karpov to a quick draw with: 9...♘bd7 10.♙e2 ♘e4 11.d3 ♘xc3 12.♙xc3 ♙f6 13.♙b2 ♙c7 ½-½ [Stean-Karpov](#), Montilla, 1976.

Nowadays 9...dxc4! is reckoned to be Black's most direct route to equality.

10.cxd5 exd5

Black can avoid the hanging pawns with 10...♘xd5 11.♘xd5 ♙xd5 But hasn't scored so well after 12.d4 When the threat of ♘e5 gets White either the ♙ pair or a better pawn structure after the DSBs are exchanged on f6.

11.d4 ♘e4 12.dxc5 ♘xc3
13.♙xc3 bxc5



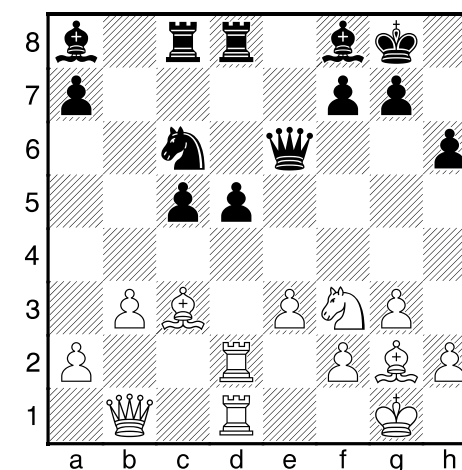
Black has hanging pawns, and White follows the usual prescription: use minor pieces and ♖s in front to restrain them.

14.♙d2

In the following game, Kramnik

plays a wonderful exchange sac to win one of Black's hanging pawns: 14.♙e2 ♖e8 15.♖fd1 ♙f8 16.♙b5 ♙b6 17.♙xb6 axb6 18.♖xd5! ♘d4 19.♘xd4 ♙xd5 20.♙xd5 cxd4 21.♙xd4 ♖a5 22.e4± For the exchange, White has two pawns and the ♙-pair. White won by avoiding the DSB exchange, creating a passed b-pawn and supporting it with his ♙s and ♖ in [Kramnik,V \(2795\)-Jones,G \(2644\)](#) London, 2012. (1-0, 49)

14...♙d6 15.♖fd1 ♖fd8
16.♙b2 ♙f8 17.♖ac1 ♖ac8
18.♙b1 h6 19.♖d2 ♙e6
20.♖cd1 ♙a8



White's pieces are just about perfectly placed to restrain Black's pawns, but Black has a



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bit more space and is supporting the center with no problem. The usual recipe here would be to stab at the center with a pawn break (b3-b4 or e3-e4, neither of which work yet) or trade some pieces. White goes for the latter.

21. ♖b2

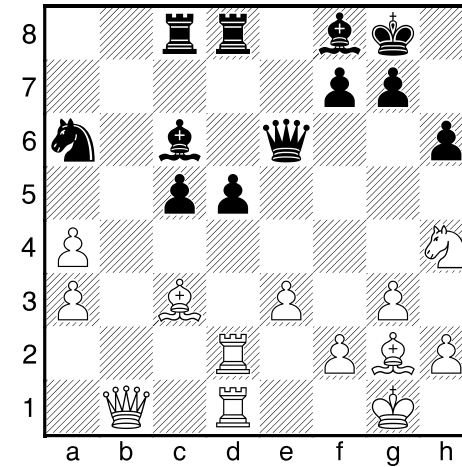
Here are two other tries, neither of which accomplish much:
21. ♖e1 d4 22. exd4 cxd4 23. ♖a1

♙b4=;

21. ♖a1 ♖d7 22. ♘e5 ♘xe5
23. ♙xe5 d4!? 24. exd4 ♙xg2
25. ♙xg2 ♖cd8=.

21...a5 22. ♘h4 ♘b4 23. a3
23. ♙e4!? threatening to skewer from f5 23...g6 24. ♙f3 softens Black's kingside a bit.

23...♘a6 24. ♙c3 a4! 25. bxa4 ♙c6



Black has played a temporary pawn sac to create a passer on

c5. White can hold the a-pawn (for now), but it's never going anywhere, and Black can pile up on it with ...♖a8 etc.

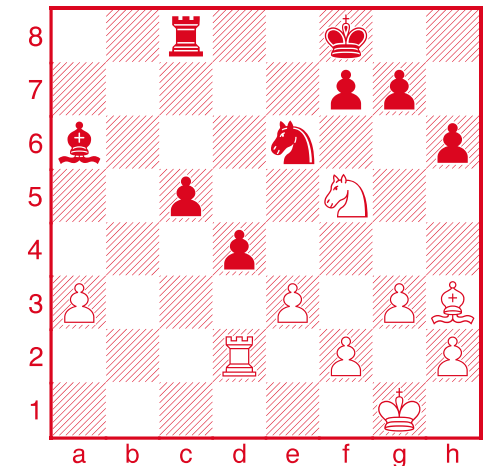
26. ♖f5

26. ♖c2 ♖a8=.

26. a5 ♘c7 27. ♖c2 ♖e8=.

26...♙xa4 27. ♖b1 ♘c7
28. ♙a5 ♙c6 29. ♖b6 ♖xf5
30. ♘xf5 ♙a8 31. ♙h3 ♘e6
32. ♖a6 ♙b7 33. ♙xd8 ♙xa6
34. ♙e7?! d4
34...♖b8!

35. ♙xf8 ♖xf8



The position David mentioned in the interview which Karpov singled out for comment.

36. ♙f1??

THE TIMES

“As the games got under way, Karpov, wearing a blue suit with draped jacket and wide flared trousers, seemed the only cool person in the room. He finished several rounds of moves so swiftly that he was able to sit down and take a rest while all his opponents were pondering what to do next.”

- Robin Young, “Mr. Karpov stoops to check his juniors”, *The Times* (Aug. 15, 1977)

Karpov Lloyds Bank Simul
David is far right.





Chess Canada Embiggened

Trying to stop Black's pawn(s).

Not surprisingly, Karpov was right: after 36.exd4! cxd4 37.f4 White is still in the game, since the one isolated pawn is easier to stop than the pawn pair.

36...d3!

Which now can't be stopped at less than the cost of an exchange: ...c4 is too strong a threat, and the game line shows that the d-pawn isn't hanging.

37.♙xd3 ♖d8

Black collects the exchange and goes on to win the game.

**38.♙xa6 ♖xd2 39.a4 ♘c7
40.♙c4 ♖c2 41.♘d6 ♘e8!**
Simple, when you know how.

42.♘xe8 ♖xc4

0-1

IM Title...

You got the IM title in 1984. Was there a period after that when you made a push to get the GM title?

No. After graduating from University, I went straight into a full-time job and stopped playing in tournaments a couple years after getting the IM title. In fact I've had two 6-7 year breaks from chess over the course of my career. But I always ended coming back!

You've played in the Olympiad twice: for Wales in 1996, and Canada in 2000. Could you tell us a bit about that?

When I started playing chess again in 1993-4, I found out that Wales had changed their eligibility criteria to include players with Welsh parents. Playing for Wales was a great experience and the 1996 Yerevan Olympiad one of my best results, as well a fascinating trip to a unique country.

When and why did you move to Canada?

I moved to Canada with my wife in 1998 to take a job with ATI Technologies. We have two kids (aged 18 and 20), and live in Toronto.

Do you give chess lessons?

I'm working full time and doing

chess writing as a sideline, so I don't have any time for coaching!

Tournaments @ 50+

Given that you're over 50 and working full-time, how do you handle the strain of a long tournament? You were just at the Canadian Open, did you find yourself getting more tired, or was it OK because it was (mostly) just one round a day?

It wasn't bad. I find the two games a day quite strenuous these days, but one game a day just about manageable.

What time of day were they?

I think most of the games are at 6pm.

Do you have a late dinner afterward or do you eat early?

I usually have something early, just because I don't like to play on an empty stomach. I think the perfect time is a 3 pm game, or something like that, so you can work around and have some-

thing to drink before and then the last three rounds were at 1pm, 1pm, 11am.

Did you spend much time between your games doing prep for your next rounds?

I always try to prepare. I think one of the things is not too over-prepare, then you get tired during the game itself; so, just a couple of hours.

Would you start doing that the night before when the pairings came out, or would you try to avoid it before bedtime?

I think, for a 6pm game, I usually just check the pairing the next morning. The main thing is to get some sleep. Because, if you have a late game, and *then* you check the pairings you'll be up 'til all hours.

Do you have anything like a set amount of time you try to leave between the end of when you're doing your prep and the game? Maybe, try to stop 40 minutes beforehand, or two hours beforehand...

In this case there was a 20 min-



Chess Canada Embiggened

ute walk to the venue, and then I'll usually fit in some time to eat on the way. So, at least an hour and a half. Because sometimes if you prep right up to the last minute and then you play someone *else* you're thrown off even more.

Did you have any postmortems with any of your opponents? I think the last times I played in some of these major events, it just doesn't happen.

It would say, actually, in the majority of the games, because of the one game per day. I think if you have a second game coming up, I personally just want to have a break. Some people analyze or even play blitz, but that's kind of crazy. There were some good ones... with Aman Hambleton, Samsonkin, Chernaiev was very lively one that went on for quite a while.

More than half an hour?

Yeah, it felt like it, because it was late at night; it was probably an hour or 45 minutes.

Did you go to a bar, or was this

at the hotel and they had to place to sit and drink?

It was just in the venue, they had a skittles room outside, and we were staying in different places. It was a pretty friendly atmosphere. So long as you have time, it's good. Because a lot of people are tempted to just go back, turn on the engine, see what it says. I think the post mortem is very valuable: see what your opponent thought, what your immediate impressions are.

And when you check the computers, you're all going to be thinking the same things afterwards.

Yeah, so I try not to analyze my games at the tournament. Just think about the next one.

When you're preparing, do you take account of the games of yours that have appeared in databases as a way of guessing what your opponents might be prepping for? I talked to GM Rozentalis when he was here at the 2013 Canadian Open, and he knew about CanBase.

IM David Cummings

He plays in Canada enough, but he already knew about it, and that's what he was using to prepare for Canadian opponents, even the non-titled ones.

Because it's such a comprehensive database, actually.

Yeah, and because he plays in two or three Canadian events every summer... and it's a business trip for him. So, do you consider things like that when you're preparing? Do you think about the games of yours that have appeared in databases

and use that to try to guess what your opponent is going to think about you? Or is that just too much second-guessing?

I guess it crosses my mind. If I'm playing something that I haven't played





Chess Canada Embiggened

before, or I haven't played much, I think "did that appear on the database?", since I might have played games that weren't on the database. So, it might not necessarily affect the decision, but it might be more of a surprise than it would. That's one thing that the American players — have you noticed that almost none of the American Opens end up on any database? — like all the Goichberg tournaments. Now, it's only a very few games.

... or some of them on the very top boards, like at the World Open. I think they've actually have the Monroi devices.

That's the only one. And so they have very strong events, and you'll get pretty strong players, but they'll have very few [games].

I guess it means their novelties could last a little bit longer that way.

Or you just piece it together... [but]... people change their repertoire, obviously...

Notes:
IM David Cummings
Cummings, David H (2336)
Fritsche, Lutz (2303)

E94

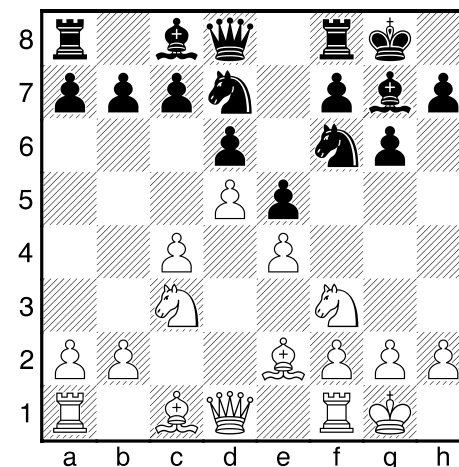
50+ World Senior Team Championship Dresden (8.1), 14.07.2018

This game was played in Canada's 3-1 win against Germany 2 who had a similar average rating to our team. This was probably our best match result in Dresden, and set up the final round clash with eventual champions USA.

1.d4

Although I opened with 1 d4, the game transposed into the KID line I recommended in my 1.c4 repertoire.

1...♘f6 2.♘f3 g6 3.c4 ♕g7
4.♘c3 0-0
5.e4 d6
6.♕e2 ♘bd7
7.0-0 e5
8.d5

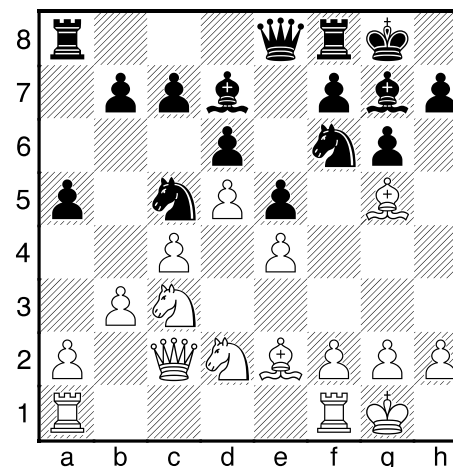


Here 8.♕e3 is White's most fashionable choice these days. 8 d5 is a slightly older line that I analyzed and adopted because it has a similar feel to the Petrosian Variation (6...e5 7 d5).

8...♘c5 9.♖c2 a5 10.♕g5
♕d7

Already a slight inaccuracy. Black should push the bishop back with 10...h6 11.♕e3 and now 11...b6 is the main move.

11.♘d2 ♖e8 12.b3



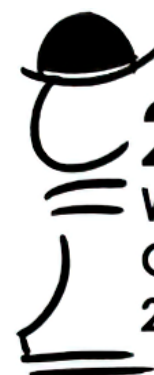
12...♔h8?!

Black is making typical King's Indian moves, but they are a bit out of context and he isn't generating counterplay quickly enough to combat White's queenside expansion.

editor – Leela and Stockfish both opt for 12...♘h5!?, and rate White as having a small advantage... which diminishes the further they analyze!?

2018 World Senior Teams

Canada lost to the winning USA team in the final round, but Victor Plotkin and Michael Barron won the Team Blitz.



28th
WORLD SENIOR
CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP
2018





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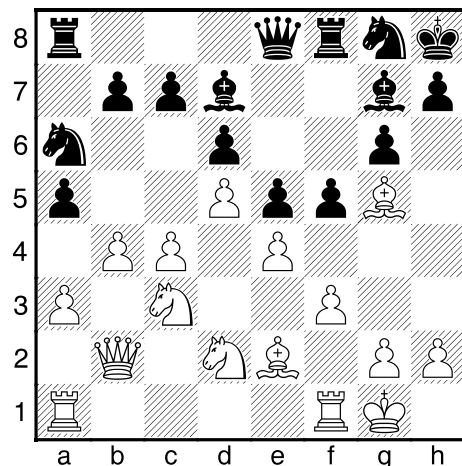
13.a3 ♖g8 14.b4 ♘a6

If Black goes for the typical sequence 14...axb4 15.axb4 ♘a4? then 16.♘b5! is crushing as White wins the c-pawn after 16...♙xb5 17.cxb5 ♘b6 18.♙xc7 etc.

15.♙b2

A slightly unusual placement of the queen, but I figured that my opponent wanted to trade the dark squared bishops. In that case the queen is well placed with an x-ray to Black's king along the a1-h8 diagonal.

15...f5 16.f3

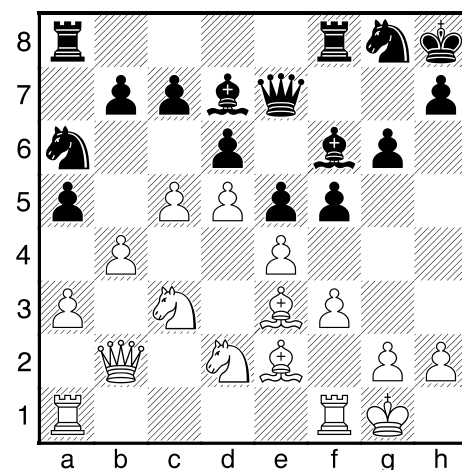


16...♙f6

I was out of book well before this point, but an older game instead saw 16...f4 17.c5! a typical idea

we will see in the game 17... axb4 18.axb4 dxc5 19.♙xa6 cxb4 20.♙xb7 bxc3 21.♙xc3 ♖xa1 22.♖xa1 and White had an overwhelming advantage thanks to his queenside penetration, Khusenkhojaev, M (2377)– Daulyte, D (2222) St Petersburg 2007 (1-0, 36).

17.♙e3 ♙e7 18.c5!



One of White's typical ideas in Petrosian-like setups with Black's knight stuck on the a6-square. White offers a temporary pawn sac, and his queenside play moves very quickly.

18...♙g5

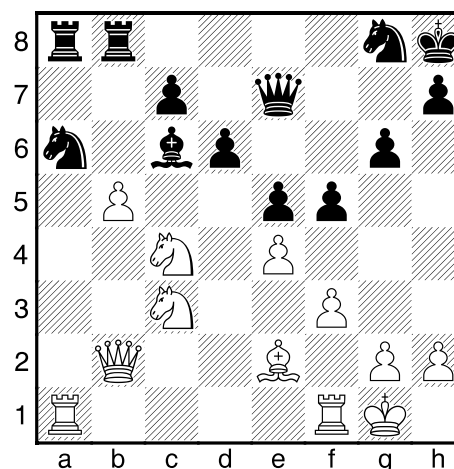
Grabbing the pawn doesn't help, since after 18...dxc5 19.b5 ♘b8 20.♘c4 Black's pieces

are hopelessly uncoordinated. *editor* – e.g. 20...b6 21.d6! cxd6 22.♘d5+.

19.♙xg5 ♙xg5 20.♘c4 axb4 21.axb4 ♙e7 22.c6!

The thematic follow up to 18 c5.

22...bxc6 23.dxc6 ♙xc6 24.b5 ♖fb8



Black uses the pin on the b5-pawn to avoid losing a piece to the fork, but I had calculated that I was still winning material.

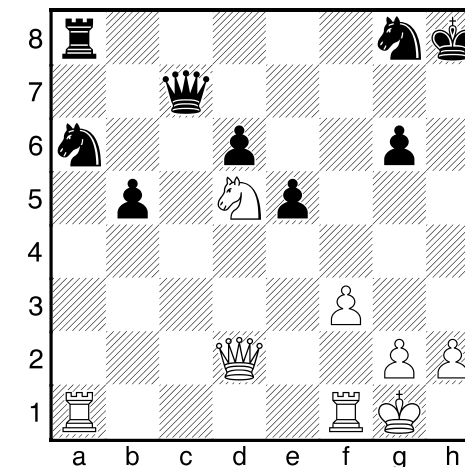
25.♙d2 ♙xb5 26.♘xb5 ♖xb5 27.♘e3

This is the point. Black either loses the a6-knight or has to drop an exchange.

27...c6

27...♖b6 28.♘d5 followed by ♘xb6.

28.♙xb5 cxb5 29.exf5 ♙c7 30.fxg6 hxg6 31.♘d5



White has an extra exchange for a pawn but his position is winning since he has more active pieces and Black's king is exposed. I managed to wrap up the game from here.

31...♙b7 32.♖fd1 ♘c5 33.♖xa8 ♙xa8 34.♘b6 ♙a3 35.♙xd6 ♙e3+ 36.♙f1 ♘b3 37.♘d7 e4 38.♙e5+ ♙h7 39.♘f8+ ♙h6 40.♙h8+ ♙g5 41.♖d5+

1-0

The English

Speaking of repertoires, you've published two books on White repertoires. One in 2001...

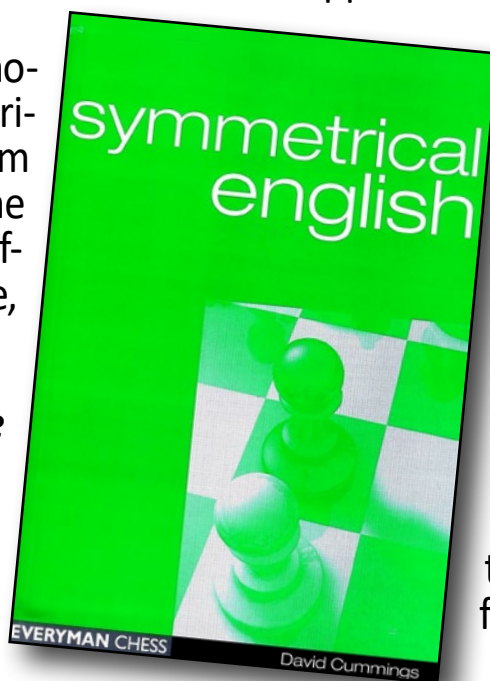
That was more of a monograph, it was a symmetrical English, a survey from both sides. But this one is designed to be a reference from white side, starting with 1.c4.

At the time you were working on the book, how much of that repertoire was your repertoire?

I think that my repertoire has bounced around over the years. I guess... I tried to create the repertoire I wanted to play. For example, the Four Knights line with 1.c4 e5 [2.Nc3 Nf6 3.Nf3 Nc6 4.e3]. I used to play that years and years ago... many decades ago [laughs]... when it first came up, and I've always liked that one. And... the Petrosian King's Indian has been a long-time favourite as

well. I have played other things also. So it was kind of combining some things that I was playing and others to put together a coherent repertoire. Because I've flipped around and tried different things

over the years, and it always helps to get a broader experience and not play the same thing. But to fill in the gaps I had to come up with some things that I hadn't played that much before.



Do you have a range of moves that you play against the 1.c4 repertoire? We played a rapid game today and you played a King's Indian, is that your main defense to c4/d4, or one of them?

No. You played a good game, by the way...

[sotto voce] It was a fluke. [but, see Appendix!]

... actually, not recently. I have I played the King's Indian at times. I normally play the Queen's Gambit type setup as Black.

So, you would be playing against yourself in what... the Tarrasch lines?

Something along those lines, yes. I've only played one tournament recently, so I haven't faced it directly, but probably one of those kinds of lines.

There's this comment of Botvinnik's that's occasionally quoted, but is actually nonsensical if you think about it, about how you have to design your repertoire so that you never end up playing against yourself...

Against yourself?

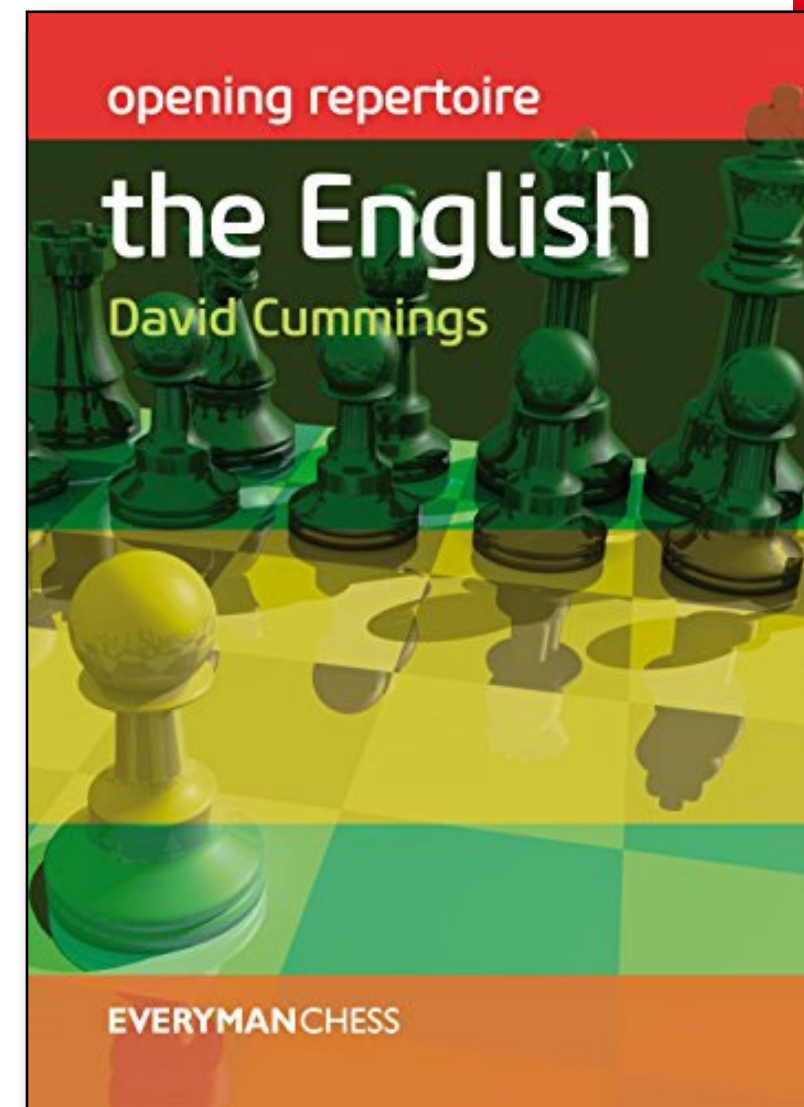
... that you'll never end up playing against your own repertoire. But of course, that's impossible, because the starting position, you're go-

ing to play both sides of that one. And there's nothing you can do if your opponent plays what you play.

Yeah, exactly.

So, there would have to be some positions in this book where you would be on either side of them.

Yeah, I think that's one thing





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that a Queen's Gambit player can have. Obviously, part of the goal of the White repertoire is to be annoying to your opponent. Depending on their particular preferences, like, if they play the Grunfeld, you don't let them play the Grunfeld.

...and if they want to play the Nimzo then the pawn stays on d2.

With the Queen's Gambit Declined, and on Slav setups, depending on how flexible the player is, it can also be pretty annoying, because it tends to, as you've seen, lead down kind of a Tarrasch type of setup, and a lot of players as Black don't really like to defend the IQP or even take on the IQP. So if people don't have a broad or flexible repertoire it can take them into something that they weren't intending or are not too comfortable [with]. And, obviously... it's not a forced win, so it's playable for both sides, and I'll have to face it when I face it. *[laughs]*

Obviously, part of the goal of the White repertoire is to *be annoying to your opponent*. ...if they play the Grunfeld, you don't *let* them play the Grunfeld.

Notes:
IM David Cummings
Cummings, David H (2322)
Hjartarson, Johann (2513)
A10
Reykjavik Open Reykjavik (6.14),
11.03.2018

My opponent was a top player in the 1980s and early 90s, winning a Candidates match against Kortchnoi in 1988. He has returned to tournament play in recent years, maintaining a 2500+ level.

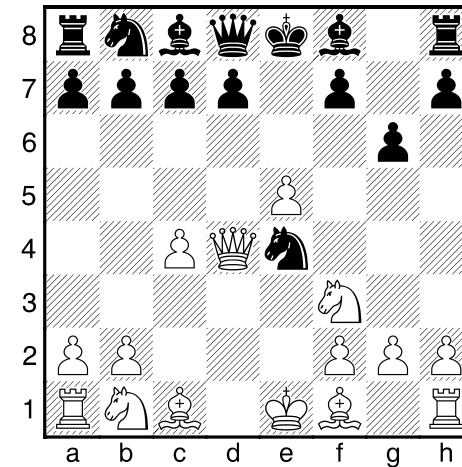
1.c4 g6 2.e4

An anti-Grunfeld move order.

2...e5

Black in turn avoids a standard King's Indian or Modern Defence, but enters a line that has its own unique character and theory.

3.d4 ♘f6 4.♘f3 exd4 5.e5 ♘e4 6.♙xd4



6...♘c5?!

After lengthy thought, my opponent came up with an improvised move (and a novelty) which, however, doesn't work out well for him.

6...♗b4+ is the main line, but this can get very sharp, especially after 7.♙d1!? which came to prominence through the 2016 game Potkin-Wei Yi, which I analyzed in my book.

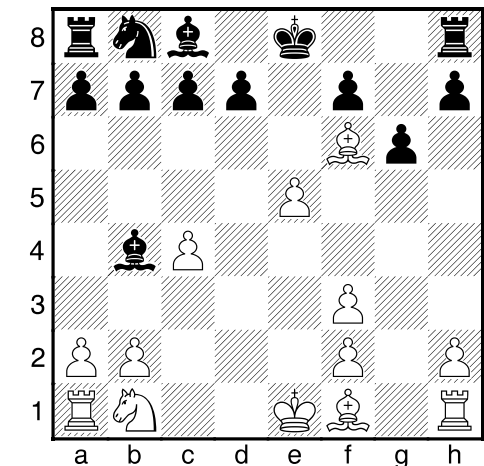
editor - that game continued: 7...f5 8.exf6 ♘xf6 9.♙h4 d5 10.♗g5 ♗e7 11.cxd5 ♘xd5 12.♗c4! with a wild position where, incredibly, Black has no good discovered checks with the centralized ♘d5.

12...♘c6 13.♗xd5? (13.♘bd2±)
13...♗e6? 14.♗xe7 ♘xe7 15.♙e1
♗xd5? 16.♙c2! ♙d7 17.♘c3+-
♙f5+ 18.♙c1 0-0-0 19.♙xe7
♗xf3 20.gxf3 ♙xf3 21.♙g3 ♙c6
22.♙c2 ♙d6 23.♙ae1 ♙hd8
24.♙1e2 a5 25.♙e5 1-0 [Potkin, V](#)
[\(2585\)-Wei, Y](#) (2714) Moscow,
2016.

7.♗g5 ♘e6 8.♗xd8 ♘xd4
9.♗f6 ♘xf3+

This is forced, since after
9...♘c2+ 10.♙d1 ♘xa1 11.♗xh8
White will pick up the a1-knight
sooner or later.

10.gxf3 ♗b4+



11.♘c3

The engine prefers 11.♘d2 with a big advantage for White, but I thought that opening lines was



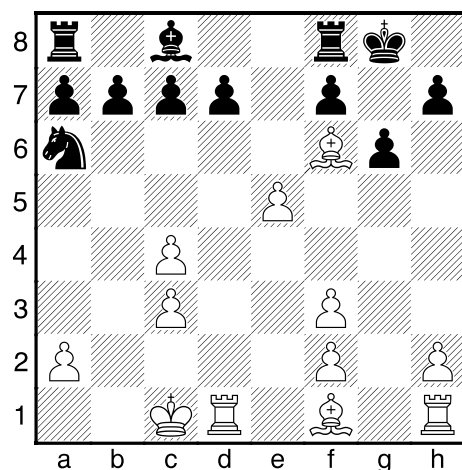
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more important than getting a second pair of doubled pawns.

11...0-0 12.0-0-0

editor – 12.♔d2 looks like a way to keep the pawns solid, but Black has 12...d5! and White's exposed ♔ will hurt more than the doubled c-pawns.

12...♙xc3 13.bxc3 ♘a6

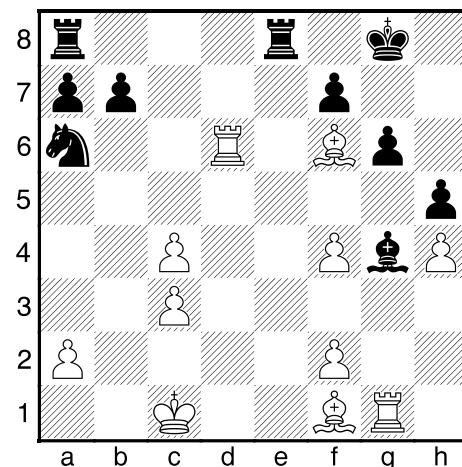


At first sight, it looks like Black is hopelessly behind in development, but in fact he can unravel fairly quickly (at the cost of a pawn) starting with ...d7-d6.

14.h4 h5 15.♖g1 ♖e8 16.f4

White tries to open the position for his rooks and bishops before Black can consolidate.

**16...d6 17.exd6 cxd6
18.♖xd6 ♙g4**



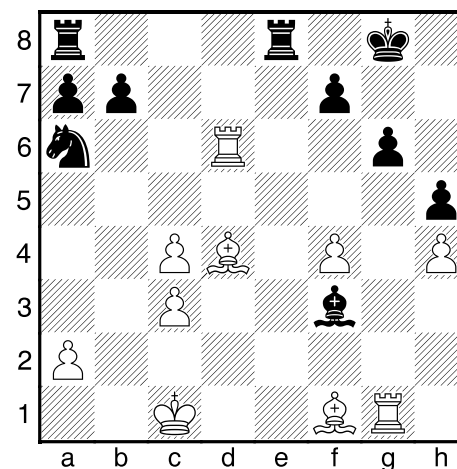
Black now threatens to generate significant counterplay, with his e8-rook entering White's position, and ...♘a6-c5 in the air.

19.f3!

The most difficult move in the game. If White plays routinely with for example 19.♙g2 ♘c5 20.f5 ♖e2 then Black starts to generate threats.

By this point I had more than caught up with my opponent on the clock, and in fact got into time trouble before move 30.

19...♙xf3 20.♙d4!



This was my idea. By defending the g1-rook and dominating the a6-knight, White manages to coordinate his forces.

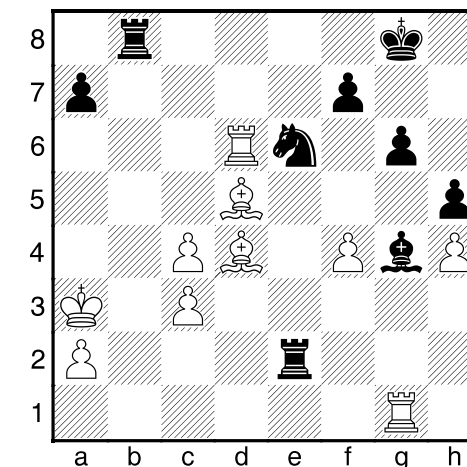
20...♖e1+

If instead 20...♖ad8 21.♖xd8 ♖xd8 22.f5 the position opens up and White's bishops will take over.

21.♔b2

This felt more natural to me, although 21.♔d2 may be even stronger, for example 21...♖a1 22.c5 ♖xa2+ 23.♔e3 ♙g4 24.♙c4 ♖e8+ 25.♙e5 followed by 26.♖xg6+ wins.

**21...♙g4 22.♙g2 ♖e2+
23.♔a3 ♘c7 24.♙xb7 ♖b8
25.♙d5 ♘e6**



26.c5

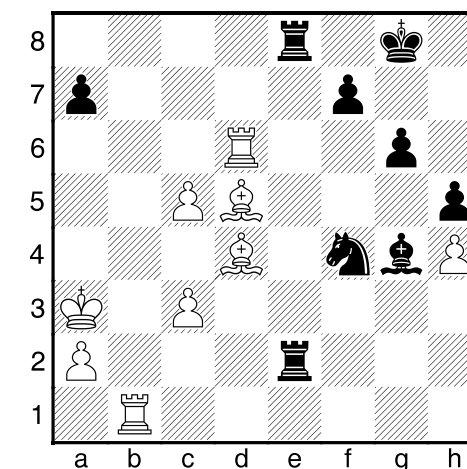
The centralized bishops and dangerous passed c-pawn give White a close to winning position. 26.♙e5! ♖bb2 27.c5+-.

26...♘xf4 27.♖b1

Wresting the b-file from Black's control.

27...♖be8

27...♖xb1?? loses to 28.♖d8+ ♔h7 29.♖h8#.





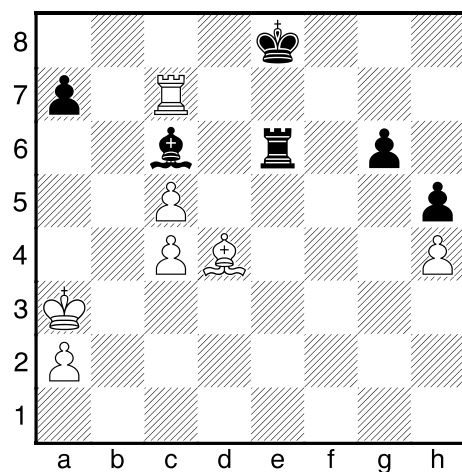
Chess Canada Embiggened

28. ♖xf7+?!

A shame. With only a few minutes left to move 40, I went for the clarity of a superior rook and opposite coloured bishop endgame, but this throws away a large part of White's advantage.

28. ♖c4 is tremendous for White. A sample line is 28... ♖2e7 29. c6 ♖e6 30. ♖a6 ♖c8 31. ♖b8 ♖xa6 32. ♖dd8 and White makes decisive material gains.

28... ♖xf7 29. ♖f6+ ♖g8
30. ♖xf4 ♖e6 31. ♖f2 ♖d5
32. ♖b2 ♖2e6 33. ♖b4 ♖e2
34. ♖xe2 ♖xe2 35. c4 ♖c6
36. ♖b8+ ♖f7 37. ♖c8 ♖e6
38. ♖c7+ ♖e8



39. ♖xa7

The last big chance was 39. ♖b4! when White retains good winning chances.

editor – The ♖b4 defends the c-pawns and now White threatens both ♖xa7 and ♖e5-d6.

39... ♖e4 40. ♖f6 ♖xc4
41. ♖e7+ ♖f8 42. ♖e5 ♖e4
Forcing the rooks off when the draw becomes clear.

43. ♖xe4 ♖xe4 44. ♖b4
♖e8 45. a4 ♖d7 46. a5 ♖d3
47. ♖c3

1/2-1/2

No ...g3 Formula

This brings up one of the things I've noticed [about the book], and it's mentioned in all the reviews, because Quality Chess came out with three volumes by Marin with an English repertoire – a formula starting with c4/g3, and very often going into Botvin-

nik type setups with e4 and d3 – and those repertoire books are great, but they're something like 1500 pages or so? It's over a thousand.

[editor - it's 1200.]

And some of the reviews compare your book unfavorably with the thorough coverage that you find in the Marin volumes, even though yours is one volume. There's something that seems to me to be both unfair and lazy about that kind of a review, because they're not counting the amount of work needed to learn the repertoire. Of course, Marin is more thorough, but it also means that you have to spend at least three times as much time trying to learn that, if you're going to learn everything that's

in there and not just the rough outlines of the chapters.

But this is, in a way, a challenge for learning your repertoire, at least I've found this – that there's so many transpositions to very different structures, where the kind of game that you play will be really different. Like your anti-Grunfeld line, you're kind of aiming for a queenless middle game, if he plays the Bg7 and you allow the exchange of the d-pawn... [but if the Queens aren't exchanged, White goes for an attack with an early h4 – so that's two very different kind of middlegames from the same first few moves. [see Appendix]

Other lines are very rare at my level.... there's the King's English line with ...Bb4 and with the [white] Queen going to f5 which nobody's played against me, even though it's the first chapter of the book. So, there's more work to learn your repertoire, but it's work learning different middlegames, not memorizing opening variations.



Marin Trilogy
Not actual size.



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But it also means that for your opponents to be equalizing in these lines, it means they either have to have a broad skill-set themselves, or be extremely lucky and just happen to pick a line that they've already looked at that yours meshes with. This is something I have to remind myself about when I feel uncomfortable with these positions: it's partly because they don't appear in all that many super-GM games that I'm familiar with — they're not (yet) the kinds of get anthologized — so they're not part of my basic understanding, but they're also unlikely to be that of my opponents'.

Yes, yeah, that's right. I mean, there's a couple of things about it. I think any repertoire that is a complete repertoire for White you're going to have a very wide range of defenses to face. And so what I've tried to do is to come up with approaches that were more based, wherever possible, on structures and ideas, rather than kind of seemingly random tactics and variations because, theory in every area now has

become so developed with computer analysis and databases that there's typically a huge amount of memorization involved. So, I think it'd be unrealistic to say that to come up with a White repertoire, you don't need to learn some things.

Yeah, if your opponent decides to play something that's mildly unsound, and the only way to play against it is to play sharply, then you have to.

But if you know certain ideas, things like play with the isolated Queen's pawn, playing the Maroczy bind structure, playing some of those lines with the Kingside attack with Nd5, Qf5, or g4, some of those thematic attacks — I think in the introduction I list five or six typical things that recur — so... yes, there's a certain amount to understand those, but it'll pay you back as you can then reuse them. And even if your opponent varies, or even if you forget the exact move order, you still got the basic ideas. Even the Marin books — I really liked those books and I use their repertoire myself

GM Glenn Flear

“...in a nutshell, we are essentially presented with a ‘non-fianchetto English repertoire’....

Against a number of black set-ups an early d2-d4 is often recommended...

Some players opt for the English Opening to keep things solid whilst avoiding the need to learn much theory. Can they be persuaded that in certain cases, it's in their interest to play a more direct game with d2-d4? The author would argue that White is doing this on his own terms and surely, if it offers a challenging repertoire, some memory work is a small price to pay.

Of course, a number of players are happy to do this, especially if they can avoid the Grünfeld and Nimzo-Indian, and yet I can't remember anyone presenting this type of repertoire in print before.

Overall, I found it to be a well thought out repertoire where the English Opening is used as a weapon to limit Black's options rather than an aim in itself.. It's so well presented that for me it's a worthwhile addition to the bookshelf for players of all levels.”

— excerpts from the *NIC Yearbook*, July 2017 (p.236-239), book review.

— I think if you really look at them in detail, there's a huge variation of structures and those as well: yes, you can play the Botvinnik, but also the Dragon, and you've got to face the reversed Rosolimo... [and the Tarrasch].

But [in Marin] you're getting a similar structure for White in most of the games, but you can get totally different structures as Black. One of the things is that c4/g3 doesn't really put much direct pressure on Black, and so the downside is that Black's got a lot of freedom about what to choose, which means that you've got to do a bit more work [as White]. It's not like opening with e4 and then d4 (if you can make it) when Black's under pressure right away.

And that is one of the philosophies of my repertoire is to fight for the center. Because one thing I did realize when I was playing c4 and g3 is that you are giving Black more



of a free hand in the centre. So if 1.c4 e5 2.g3 c6 Black's kind of taking more control the center early on. And it's just one of several examples.

And, by the way, the only [review] that picks up on the level of detail was Sadler's. [see sidebar]

*I think there were a couple of others I saw online, and it's like they're in discussion groups, you know, "this book's come out; he said this, what do you think about it?" And they're saying, "if you want one volume, then you should look at Kosten's *The Dynamic English*"... which is now out of date, because it's been supplanted by Marin. Funnily, even Kosten said something like, "Oh, thank goodness [for the Marin series], I don't have to bring my book anymore. I can take these." [laughs] I love those [books]. You know, one thing I could do is just a pseudo-update to Marin. So first of all, I thought they were pretty good, I loved them, but I didn't want to just do that.*

There's another reason to recommend a c4/e3 repertoire which I haven't seen mentioned, and which I've been thinking about the last few days. And that is that one reason to study an opening is so that you can play it in tournaments and you know what you're doing and feel comfortable. But another reason to study these is so that when you're watching games played by great players, you can understand what's going on in the games. A downside of a relatively narrow repertoire book, like say, an accelerated Dragon [reversed] is that it doesn't give you familiarity with a lot of kinds of structures or positions that the top players get. You mentioned the IQP, but what you didn't mention and what people who have your book know, is that your repertoire leads to White taking the IQP in some positions and making Black take it in others where you're playing almost the same structure, but just with a tempo up, and the result is that you have to be comfortable on both sides with that middlegame.

But if you're not familiar with that, then there's a huge class of super GM games that you just have no clue about.

Right. And I think the benefit of learning something new like that it repays you in the future. Even if you change your repertoire, and you want to play... 1.e4 and you want to play the Panov attack [ed. – which leads to IQP positions] it just has benefits for those kinds of things.

I'm also thinking of non-playing benefits. One of the things that goes on in chess is being able to enjoy watching and understanding games. You only really enjoy them if you understand what's going on, and becoming familiar with more structures is a way of doing that; it sort of opens more of the chess world to you both to play but also to appreciate.

So going back to the Marin thing – c4/g3 – at the early stages I decided I wanted to create something different that could be interesting. Because you can either take the repertoire as a whole, or you can pick bits

GM Matthew Sadler

"In many ways, it's an excellent book. The production quality is superb... Cummings has also clearly put a lot of work into certain aspects of the book, most notably the early move orders (a crucial aspect of playing the English).

... The book is somewhat weaker, however, when it comes to original analysis. Looking at the books on my table next to me – Negi's Grandmaster Repertoire series, Hillarp Persson's *The Modern Tiger*, Avrukh's *The Catalan* – I can see that I've been rather spoiled by the excellence of Quality Chess' offerings! They have set the standard for opening manuals; it's not really fair to expect that same level from other publisher, and of course not every book aspires to that level of detail. However, in the current age of super-strong engines... short lines with an evaluation of 'is unclear' are not really acceptable any more."

[Sadler gives a well-chosen example here]

...

"In summary, lots of good stuff but just a little too superficial in the areas where practical experience is scanty."

— from Sadler's *New in Chess* review of *The English* (2017, issue #2),



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and pieces, and integrate it [with your preferred lines]; if you want to play a different line against the King's Indian, that's fine. But, I wanted to provide something against every defense because... what I don't like is when you read the book, it says "this transposes to the King's Indian, which is beyond the scope" is the classic line.

I know... and you can play the King's Indian against basically everything except 1.e4.

And there are *lots* of other examples of that, like transposing to the Catalan. I wanted to provide that. And to do it in a sort of realistic way you have to try and limit Black's options as well. So just several areas I did that to push [the size/difficulty] down.

Chess Publishing

I want to ask some questions about the technical aspects of producing a book for a publisher.

Sure, John.

What sort of programs do you use to do your analysis of chess positions? ChessBase?

ChessBase. Obviously, the engine of the day, which as we're discussing this is typically Stockfish or Komodo, depending on which is the best at any one time.

I wouldn't say I'm a super user of engines, but in key positions I sometimes use them both to compare them just to get a "second opinion". Obviously ChessBase is pretty good for running engines, you can do your analysis. It does a reasonable job of outputting the text file, but you definitely have to do a lot of formatting before it's ready.

So you select the games and export the text.

Yeah, and I send him a complete text document, a Word doc.

Have you cleaned it up, removed the brackets and that sort of stuff?

It's more than that. I've worked with the Everyman guys in the past and they have a very good house style, so you follow that.

It's actually a formatted document, then they do the final editing and type-setting to produce the final book.

Who is your editor there?

Byron Jacobs does the main typesetting.

Is he a GM?

He's an IM. When I when I put the book together, [GM] John Emms was there and he gave me feedback on it when we were in the very early stages, he suggested some lines and was very helpful and supportive. He pointed out some lines I missed or commented on some of the chess content. So it's great to have someone strong like that.

I think a lot of people like the layout of the book. I think there's a lot of great chess publishers out there, there's also a variation in the formatting. I think Everyman does a good job of creating an easy-to-read [format] whether you have a chess set or not.

Did you have any ideas for doing different kinds of layout?

I'm wondering if there are other ways of presenting chess ideas that isn't the standard game and diagram. There are some books, some of the Chess Stars books have them, where they will have a one or two page layout at the beginning of the chapter with the absolutely basic ideas, and they'll be lots of arrows and a bunch of bullet points, something like that, a kind of the "executive summary" of the chapter. But I don't remember seeing anything like arrows on boards in Everyman books.

It's just a choice of the house style you follow.

Do you have any preference there?

I like the one we use. I like the way it ended up, because — compared to my previous book on the English, which was a dual column thing — this one takes more space, but I think it is easier to follow. One thing you have to decide: do you want to do complete games or the variation tree? I could have gone either way when I chose the complete



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games approach.

You did a kind of hybrid really, because the intros are like variations.

Yeah, I was going to come to that. So it's basically the complete games, because I think that's important, just to see the flow of the game and how the middlegame ideas follow on from the opening. Where it goes into some long ending, I often just cut it off with very brief notes, or just truncated the game, because sometimes you can end up just burning up space for no reason. But then I found that certain things fitted into this hybrid approach. So, putting the dedicated chapters on move orders I thought was important; and then also having theoretical sections where it made more sense.

With the summaries at the end of the chapters, I thought that was a good hybrid of the two of them as a way of trying to get the best of both.

In ChessBase you can do the repertoire-style printout —

where it produces something that looks like the ECO tables — with the mainlines and footnotes. Did you ever consider doing a couple of pages of that for your book?

No I didn't. I think part of that is the publisher's preference. I wanted to keep it more verbal, I think that's the style of Everyman to use verbal explanations. I think there was one of the early Marin books — where he did the 1.e4 e5 repertoire for Black — and he had that. Before he wrote these [English] books, he wrote these books for Black in, like 2008, and he had these ECO sections. [editor - *Beating the Open Games*, Quality Chess, 2008]. I think it's okay.... I was brought up with ECO and BCO, I don't know if you're familiar with them...

Batsford Chess Openings. That was the first opening book I bought.
BCO 2?

No, the first one, by Kasparov and Keene, with the little anecdotes at the beginning about

looking through Gary's notes during a tournament. I bought that from **Lawrence Day**, actually, at the Toronto Chess Club when it came out. \$12! He said "Oh, you're preparing for the Toronto International?" Yep.

That can be a way to do it, but the [Everyman] series is as verbal as possible. Did you notice we didn't use the Informator symbols in them? When you don't use them you have to come up with words.

Actually, I didn't notice that. I think if I can't put both side's plans into words then I don't think I know it... even if I've memorized the lines, I have to be able to push it a little bit further, like know what the next couple of reasonable moves are.

I listened to a podcast with German IM **Christoph Sielecki**, who has written one or two books. I think he did one on the Bogo....

Yeah, he did one for Everyman, it was good... [Opening Repertoire: Nimzo and Bogo Indian, Everyman, 2015]...

...and he said he would never do that again. Because it's just way too much work and there's hardly any money in it. Is your experience different or... ?

It was certainly a lot of work. Yeah, I really enjoyed doing it, but it was quite a bit of work in the end. I don't want to comment on the remuneration.

I don't want to ask you about that. I assume nobody, even Kasparov, gets rich from writing chess books, and he would have been the best paid of all of them.

Exactly. You get paid for doing it, but you're not doing it to get rich.

Do they pay a flat rate, or do you get royalties as well?

There's a certain amount up front and they do a print run, and if it keeps selling you get some royalties.



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Chesspublishing.com

Your books aren't the only things that you publish on chess. You're also a columnist for chesspublishing.com, where you are responsible for flank openings. Can you tell me what that involves?

I've been doing that for about two years, for the website chesspublishing.com. And if you don't know about the, the website, basically, there are 12 sections covering the whole span of opening theory, and I'm responsible one of those 12, which is basically any move other than e4 and d4: the English and Flank openings. So it's not just the English that I've written about — Nf3 and c4 are the main two moves — but there's also b3, g3, with our friend Baadur Jobava.

Even 1.Nc3?

Yeah. I think, in order it's the occasional f4, and the very occasional Nc3, I did a b4 once... g4 doesn't really crop up. But in theory, it's anything.

So what I have to do every month to publish an article,

which is a selection of 8 games. So I look at the top-level chess for the last month, pick 8 games, and then write an article that gives an overall description, then I annotate all eight games, which are supplied in a database.

If you subscribe to the website, you get a full database, and the annotated games every month. For free, you can just look at the website and see

the high-level summary, so you can get an idea of the trends. So there's a lot of good information across the website for free, and you're getting more if you're a subscriber.

How much is a subscription to one of the 12 sections?

I think it's pretty reasonable. For one section is \$20 a year, and then you get discounts for mul-

tiple sections.

\$20 a year would be 96 annotated games of the latest games in the openings you've subscribed to, which are probably the opening you play. How are they sent to you? PGN?

Yeah, PGN.

So you can add them to your own database or your own repertoire database.

Yes, and in fact, as a subscriber you can get the complete historical database, which I think starts around the year 2000. [Tony Kosten](#), of *Dynamic English* fame, is the English Grandmaster who runs it.

Was he the flank openings editor before you?

He was, yes, he takes a personal interest. [laughs] And you get the historical database, so that's all those annotated games for those 17 years with a number of different contributors...

Wait! You get all that with a year's subscription?

Yes.



Harbourfront Blitz in Toronto.



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You get 17 years' worth of analysis?

Yes. So you get these old games for the openings you subscribe to it. And it's a mine of information. Last month, I found [Vidit](#), the Indian grandmaster, played this Ne5 on move seven, which had only been played six times before, so it was effectively a Novelty because the guy he was playing, [Wojtaszek](#), didn't know what to do and went down in flames. But in the chesspublishing database, two of the six games were in there, because in 2004 Tony [Kosten] wrote about it. One of them was Tony's own game.

So that means we know at least one person who's not subscribing to it: Wojtaszek doesn't subscribe. [laughs]

There are a lot of different sections: some of them are e4 e5, some of them are e5 c5, and some of them are e4 e6/c6, or some other combinations of them, and some are more esoteric...

They cater for some of the people who have these pet

openings, like an anti-Sicilian section, there is a d4 d5 section they call the "d4-specials".

That was Eric Prie's, because that's what he played all the time.

Some people will like the London, some people like the Dragon, and some of them get a little bit of disproportionate coverage, just because the people who like them like them a lot. So I think it's a good deal.

I send that in every month, and I have to do a survey of what are the eight most noteworthy games. So selecting the games is one of the biggest things, and when I have selected them I start annotating: search for where the novelty was introduced, where it differed from previous theory, and then map it to what we already had in the database, and what we covered before and signpost it to that, and then do some annotations, you know, focusing on the opening, but it goes through the whole game.

Are you also looking through correspondence databases, or

looking at recent correspondence games, or games played online? Did you, for instance, do anything from any of the PRO League games that were played on chess.com?

Yeah, those are included. I tend to use the correspondence database for reference, but I've never used one of those as the main game.

It'd be hard to know when to date some of those games, since they might have just finished this month but could have started several years ago.

Especially in the sharp openings: those are becoming an increasingly important reference because the people are basically using the engine lines and playing it out to see how it goes.

Or they're getting their engines to play each other, before choosing their move for the correspondence game, so those games are like, the closest thing to the truth about any sharp line, especially if you find a good correspondence player who really knows how to use

the computers.

I find that doing those games is very instructive — I learned a lot myself as well — because you're trying to find what happened in the opening, but also looking at the turning points of the game; and it's forced me to do more in-depth analysis of GM games than I would otherwise.

Do you think that's making you a better player?

Well, I haven't got the proof of that yet... [laughs]... but it's helping my understanding. There's a difference between understanding and execution... [laughs].

I visited their discussion forums [of chesspublishing.com], and I see that sometimes you respond to comments, right? People ask a question, sometimes about your books sometimes about your analysis. It seems active and lively. Do you visit the discussion forums once a week, once a month?

I keep tabs on it weekly, especially on the section covering my area, to see if there any questions. There's a discussion



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on there at the moment about whether the forum is as lively as it used to be, because I think people are finding that, because you can ask what the engine thinks, you can ask “is there a place for this discussion?” There’s actually a discussion [thread] called “Is this forum dying?” But it all depends on the attitude you bring to it: if you *want* to have a *discussion*, we’re not just going to shoot someone down because they didn’t quote the engine line. There’s still room for opinion.

Having the engines also means that people no longer have to ask questions that have an obvious answer, like, “why not this move?” when there’s a variation that clearly wins and you can find it and test it yourself [on computer]. Instead, questions can now be something like “these two variations lead to positions which are close to equal, except I’m more comfortable in this one, and why is this?”

Yes. I like this, because of *that*; and I like to play *this*, because of that; and I had trouble with that;

and I played a game in a tournament the other day, and I had a guy who surprised me with this... There’s lots of things to discuss. I like the fact that it’s focused on chess playing and on the opening.

Are there are some people who post there whose comments you try to avoid?
Not really.

Are there some regular commentators who you look forward to seeing — Oh, this person usually has something good?

There are. Several, I think, but I wouldn’t want to pick one out. Yeah, there’s some good regular ones, and people have their own blogs or videos that they do... it’s very interesting, and it’s a good resource. And I think it could become better known.

Yes, I don’t think anyone’s ever mentioned it to me. I found out of it because of other online forums, but no human being has ever mentioned it to me. There’s a super-abundance of

chess analysis on the internet, and it’s not all dross, there’s a lot of excellent commentary.

Yes, but I think [chesspublishing] still holds its own; and I’m sure there’s lots of people who are no longer aware of it because they’ve come along since. It’s a good problem to have, I guess.

Notes:
IM David Cummings
Cummings, David H (2314)
Bykhovsky, Avigdor (2563)
A28

Chess to Remember Toronto
(3.2), 23.09.2018

My opponent is a Russian GM, currently living in Israel. He has visited Toronto to play in the Armenian Genocide Memorial Rapid tournament a couple of times, winning the event in 2017.

1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♘f6 3.♘f3
♘c6 4.e3

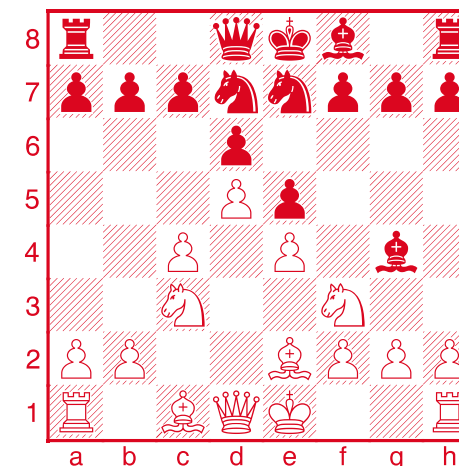
The line of the English that I cover in my book.

4...d6 5.d4 ♕g4?!

My opponent appeared to be

surprised by the opening and chose an offbeat response.

6.d5 ♘e7 7.♕e2 ♘d7 8.e4



KID-style with ...g6 or something else?

8...g6?!

Black soon ends up in a King's Indian setup where he is missing the key light-squared bishop. Looking at Bykhovsky's games in the database, he doesn't appear to be a KID player, so no doubt was not comfortable with the way things went.

9.h4

Not a bad idea, but White missed the tactical solution:

9.♘xe5! which wins a pawn since 9...♕xe2 10.♘xd7 ♕xd1??



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11. ♖f6# takes advantage of the move 8...g6.

editor – ... and Black doesn't recover the pawn with 9. ♖xe5 ♖xe5 10. ♗xg4 ♖xc4? because of 11. ♔a4+-.

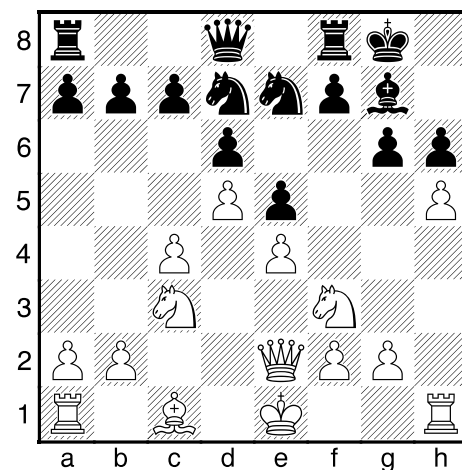
9...♗g7 10.♖g5

editor – looking at the game score it might seem that 10. ♖d2 would be a more efficient way to exchange the LSBs; but that would give Black the option of trading on e2 and then playing ...♗h6, trading the DSB before it gets buried. Instead, ♖g5 stops ...f5 (since ♖e6 would win) and so "encourages" Black to weaken his kingside light squares with ...h6, after which h4-h5 is a more serious positional threat.

**10...♗xe2 11.♔xe2 h6
12.♖f3 0-0 13.h5**

Do you think all that analysis is making you a better player?

Well, I haven't got the proof of that yet... [laughs]...



White is not expecting to generate a kingside attack here, but is aiming to lock up the kingside so that he will get a free hand for a queenside attack.

13...g5 14.g4

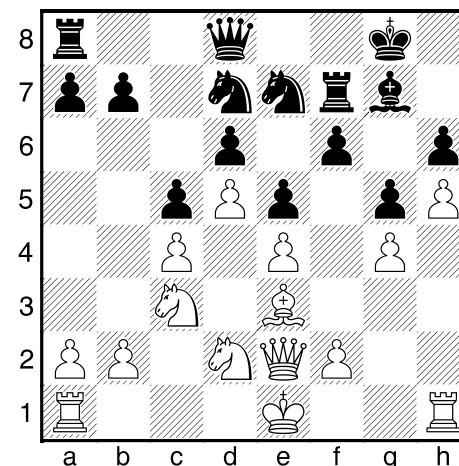
As a bonus, the f5-square is now a juicy target for White's knights. If Black still had his light-squared bishop, this would be much less serious for him.

14...f6

editor – computers rate this as a terrible move (-1), possibly because it takes away a square from Black's already cramped minor pieces or because it weakens the light squares further. If

anything, Black should welcome a sac on g5.

15.♗e3 ♖f7 16.♖d2 c5

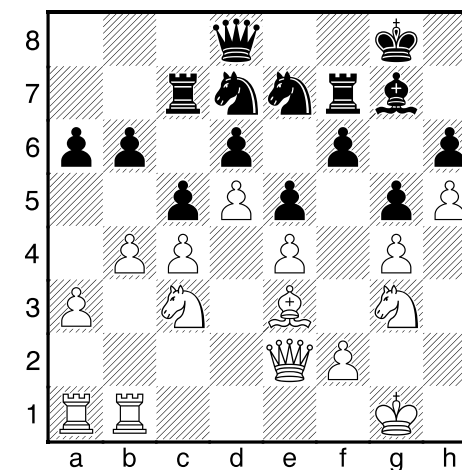


It is hard to suggest a constructive plan for Black, so he digs in and aims to defend against White's queenside expansion. I felt that White's strategic advantages should be enough to secure an eventual breakthrough.

17.0-0 a6 18.a3 ♖c8 19.b4 b6 20.♖fb1 ♖a7 21.♖f1

There is less for this knight to do on the queenside, so it relocates to target the f5-outpost.

21...♖c7 22.♖g3 ♖e7



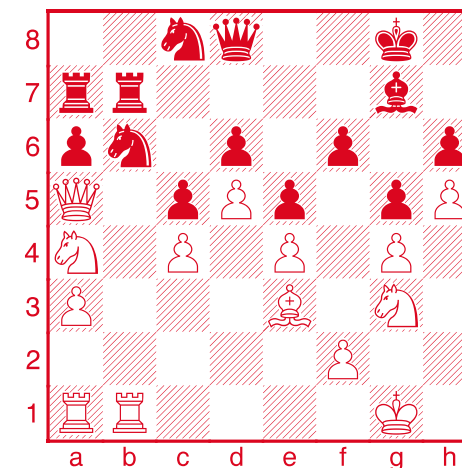
23.bxc5

Taking the opportunity to open the b-file in a moment when Black is forced to recapture with the pawn.

23...bxc5

23...♖xc5 drops the b-pawn to 24.♖xb6.

**24.♖c2 ♖a7 25.♖a4 ♖b6
26.♖a5 ♖ec8 27.♖a4 ♖fb7**





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Black's position is very passive but it looks like he is holding on. Using piece play, White has ratcheted up the pressure as much as he can, so has to look at sacrifices in order to break through.

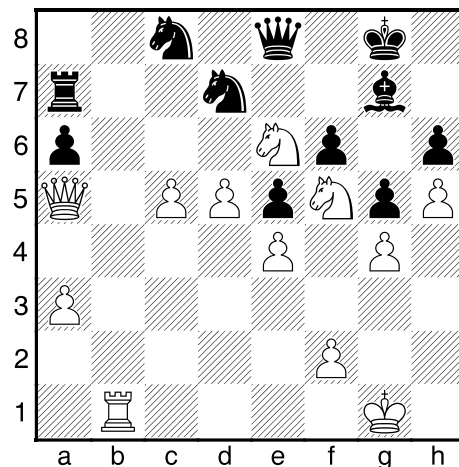
28. ♖xc5!

The sacrifice on c5 is a theme you should know when playing White against KID. I don't recall where I first saw this... long ago. As this was a Rapid game, I didn't have time to calculate everything, but was confident that White had enough resources to make it work in this particular situation.

28... dxc5 29. ♘xc5 ♖b8
30. ♘e6 ♕e8 31. c5

The pawns start rolling and it gets very grim for Black.

31... ♘d7 32. ♖xb8 ♘xb8
33. ♖b1 ♘d7 34. ♘f5



Finally the other knight enters the fray.

34... ♕f8 35. c6

Winning back some material while not slowing down White's initiative.

35... ♘db6 36. ♖xb6 ♘xb6
37. ♕xb6 ♖a8 38. ♘c7
39. ♘xe8 ♖xb6
40. c7 ♖b1+ 41. ♕g2 ♖c1
42. d6

In order to stop the pawns, Black has to give up both the rook and the bishop

1-0

I wish I had that full Kasparov set when I was 13 years old...

Chess Book Reader

Do you have much of a chess library yourself? Do you have many chess books?

Yes. I couldn't tell you the count. I know people that have a lot more but I certainly have a pretty good working collection.

More than 100?

Oh, yeah, easily.

More than 500, maybe?

Probably not.... [thinking]... honestly...

When you start counting them, they add up really fast.
[laughs]

It may well be that, because I've got two different rooms where I have the ones I'm working with...

Yeah, yeah,

and the storage room [laughs]... we're in the hundreds. Yeah.

What are some of your favourite chess books?

I was just asked this by the magazine *Chess* monthly, the UK one... I just have to think what I said....

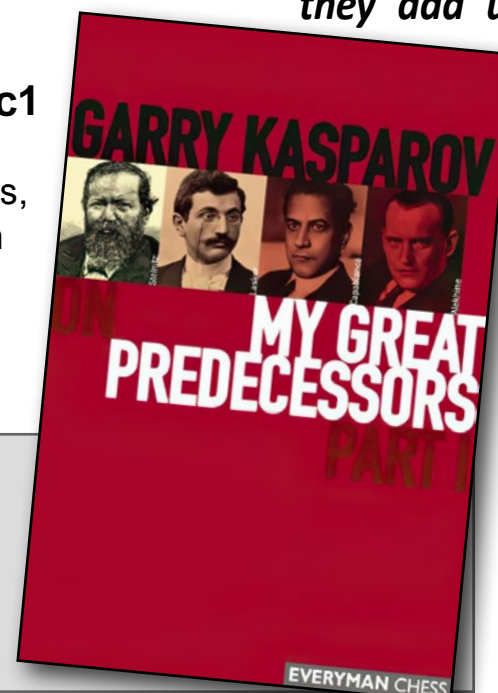
It could be a different answer this time. ☺

So my favorite just was.... obviously the [Kasparov series](#) is second to none, just in terms of the pure content and what you can learn from it.

That's interesting. I agree with that assessment, but apart from some instructors (who are always looking for new material) it's unusual to find anyone over the age of 30 who will pick a relatively recent publication.

I've noticed that chess players' favourite books are the ones they read when they were making their last big improvement. But the Kasparov series are more recent books, they came out after you had your title.

Obviously I read a lot of books

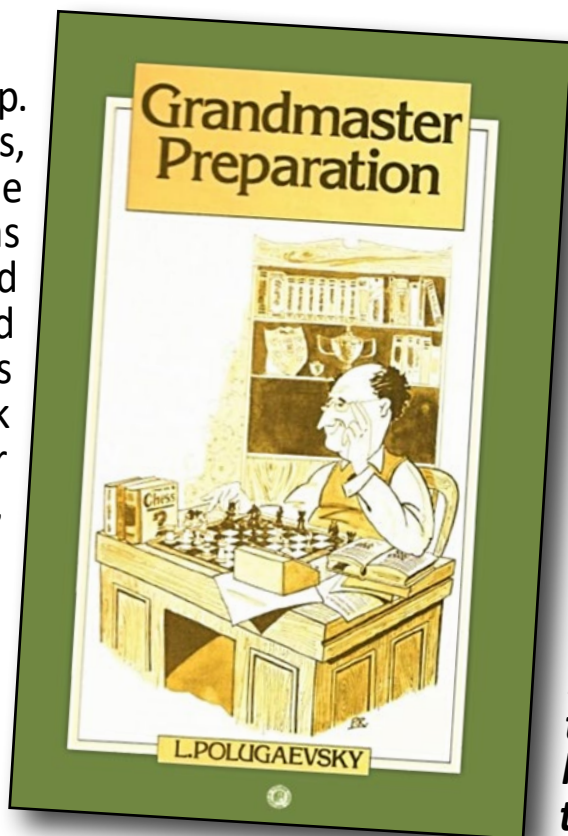




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when I was growing up. But the Kasparov ones, I think they fill in all the gaps, right? There was nothing that covered all the historical World Champions when I was growing up. You'd pick *Tal's Best Games* or *Alekhine's Best Games*, but that doesn't give you the full picture. So that's one.

Another one that I did like, sort of in the middle of my career, was the [Polugaevsky](#) book called *Grandmaster Preparation*. I think it's out of print now. That's the one where he goes through the birth of his variation and then adjourned games and then decisive games – there's three sections to it. I really enjoyed that. It's very personal as well: there are a lot of his thoughts and emotions in it. I never played that variation of the Najdorf, but it was the fact that he followed that opening through and how it was sort of his baby. Yeah, that was fascinating, I always liked



that one.

And, I guess, the [Fischer 60 Memorable Games](#), that's one of the biggest ones when I was really starting in chess.

If you had to guess, how many times have you played

through that book?
Oh, I don't know.

I ask because, there are stories about Russian players, maybe Vaganian, maybe Balashov... who said that he basically learned to play chess by just playing through this book. He just played through all these Fischer games until he'd memorized the



whole book and all the notes.

Yeah. I don't know what it is about it, the clarity of the games... and just the comments... I don't know whether Fischer actually wrote them or it was Larry Evans.

The introductions were by Evans but all of the notes were by Fischer; it's clearly Fischer's voice in there.

Yeah. I know it's supposed to be, but...

It's funny, you look at it now... it sort of reminds me a lot of Kasparov's notes in their great analytic detail. There wasn't anything even remotely close to that at the time.

Right. It might look a little sparse now, but at the time...

... it was incredibly dense. And accurate: I computer-checked it a few years ago, I just went and keyed the whole thing into my computer and the analysis in it was every bit as good as an all of his [Fischer's]

fans said... notwithstanding when [GM Robert] Huebner apparently went through the thing with a fine tooth comb trying to find mistakes...

... and John Nunn...

Well... Nunn "corrected" the Americanisms in it, which was stupid of him. I do like many of John Nunn's books. I recently bought his book on Lasker, John Nunn's Chess Course, which is 100 Lasker games with commentary.

Yeah, so I think it was that when I was growing up, and then the Polugaevsky book for some reason just kind of stuck out, and then more recent years, Kasparov as far as filling in all the gaps. I mean... I wish I had that full Kasparov set when I was 13 years old... the chess culture you to pick up. The English language books were very good, but it was still a little bit spotty.

Dvoretsky?

Obviously, [Dvoretsky](#) was also a great writer as well.

Do you like any of his books? Or

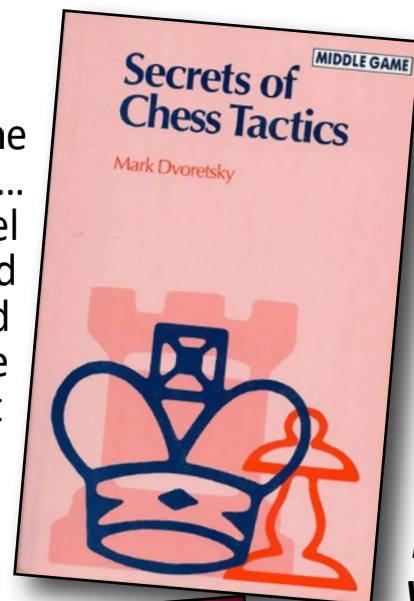


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do you admire them?

I can't say I've solved all the problems in them... [laughs]... and they are obviously a level above a lot of others. I liked the endgame book, and the series in the 90s. There were two levels, and I got most of them. There was the *Secret of Chess Training*, and the *Secret of Chess Tactics*, and at a little bit higher level there was *Opening Preparation*, and *Positional Play* is kind of regarded as a masterpiece, as a classic. And again, I wish I had read the *Positional Play* book when I was younger. I think **Jonathan Rowson** said he became a Grandmaster [by reading it] ... do you know the *Positional Play* one?

I'm confused, in part because there are two of this series and one he may have co-authored with Yussupov, and they're available from



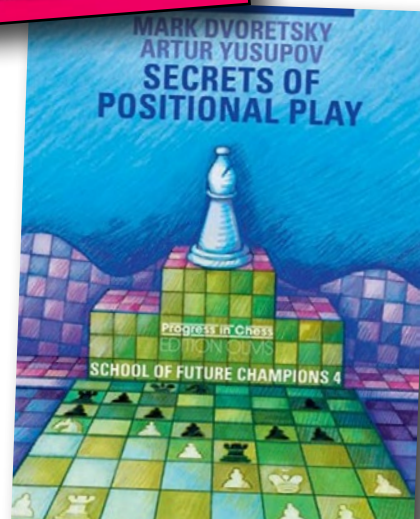
two different publishers under different names... I'm not sure if I'm keeping track of them.

The ones with Yussupov?

I borrowed one volume of those from a library here and I didn't find myself working through them.

Some exercises go a bit too dense, too difficult; and if you can't solve them you get sort of discouraged, but *Positional Play* has the chapter on prophylactic thinking

that has become the classic way of explaining that concept. I like Yussupov. He's done



some videos [for chess24.com] that are very nice.

What was the most recent chess book you opened?

Raja Panjwani's. I went to Strategy Games and bought that the other day.

Oh, you bought that? Do you want to tell everybody why it's a terrible opening book and why you're glad your name isn't on it? [laughs]

No, it looks... I've only just started it but it looks very well put together. Obviously, this is a labour of love as well. So it looks great.

And he does have a lot of interesting ideas. I started playing it, and my round one game today actually, my opponent made a blunder that I just looked up the other day because I got it wrong [in a game] online. It's not nearly as well laid out as the Everyman books: Thinker's need to go bold on some of the subvariation numbers, or use legal numbering on them... it's harder to follow them than it

needs to be.

The good thing is that Thinker's is a new publisher, and you just have more people coming to the market; but yes, they need to work on the formatting. I get a lot of ebooks as well — more often I buy the ebooks these days for my own chess. I

got the ebook of the *Taimanov Bible*, which is another Thinker's book, and it's really like a labyrinth. They said, "Okay, here's this variation...", then, "Here's this one..." and there's no logical connection, and there's no verbal introductions. Raja's book is very good with the verbal introductions. But this other one: now we got the Bishop e3 line, and then we have the Bg7 line...

I need a few paragraphs to help me sort that out.

I've kind of played that open-





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ing so I can figure it out; but if you're struggling from scratch, maybe it's not written for that audience. I think the formatting could be improved.

But anyway, it's also good that more Canadians are writing. I heard that **Razvan** and **Michael Song** have a book coming out...

Michael told me the editing was a breeze and they're way ahead of where they expected to be.

I'm amazed. Not at their energy, but... they were at tournaments... [laughs]... how did they find time to write it? [laughs]

Yeah, they were also both in their last year of high school!

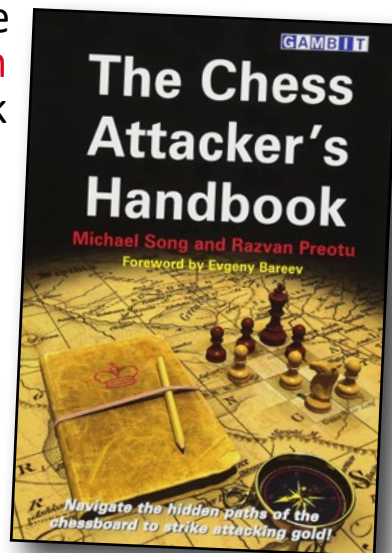
Because I think for a number of years that was no Canadian authors to speak of, right?

Yes, and now we've got three in less than one year: you and Raja and this book.

It's great.

It's also nice that the other publishers... I don't know how to

say this, but... I wouldn't have expected an opening book from Raja. You know, I wouldn't expect there'd be a mile high demand for it. And yet he's produced it and I think it is a really



good book. Similarly, the notes Michael sent me from winning the Pan Am's [see Links] they're really good: there's a lot about his preparation, a lot on the mental

emotional ups and downs in the middle of the game, plus all the variations, and everything. I think their book is going to be good... and it's three different publishers too!

Yeah, that's good that they managed to convince the publishers that they could do it. And they're young guys, and untried authors. It's great. With the rise of computers and databases and online a lot of internet content, you'd

think that chess books would become obsolete, and there seems to be almost a Renaissance in chess books.

They don't seem to be slowing down at all. I mean, even if Everyman was publishing only Cyrus Lakdawala books it's still a torrent [laughs]... he's got a new book it seems every two and a half weeks. He's a one-man publishing house. His style grates on me — his prose is too purple — he writes like somebody who read a bit too much science fiction and fantasy and too little else.

Some people seem to like it. That's encouraging, because I think with all the information [available], that people look to books for the explanation and the guidance, because people, especially amateurs, don't have time to look through all the stuff.

He is doing something that a lot of others aren't: he doesn't sound like he's a school teacher. He's not just conveying information, he's joking around; so you get some of this personality there.

Canadian-Authored Chess Books since 2016

1. David Cummings, *The English* (Everyman, 2016)
2. Jean Hebert, *The Sicilian: Thematic Sacrifices and Attacks* (le pion passe, 2017)
3. Michael Song & Razvan Preotu, *The Chess Attacker's Handbook* (Gambit, 2017)
4. George Huczek, *A to Z Chess Tactics* (Batsford, 2017)
5. Raja Panjwani, *The Hyper Accelerated Dragon* (Thinkers, 2017)
6. Yelizaveta Orlova, *Chess for Beginners: Know the Rules, Choose Your Strategy, and Start Winning* (Zephyros, 2018)
7. John & Joshua Doknjas, *The Sicilian Najdorf* (Gambit, 2018)
8. Evgeny Bareev, *Say No to Chess Principles!* (Thinkers, 2019)
9. Sasha Chapin, *All the Wrong Moves: A Memoir*, (McClelland & Stewart, 2019)
10. Joshua Doknjas, *the Ruy Lopez* (Everyman, 2020)
11. John Doknjas, *the Modern Benoni* (Everyman, 2020) forthcoming



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Are there any authors who you're looking forward to reading a book by?

Hmm... [thinks]... Razvan Preotu and Michael Song...?

Well, okay [laughs]. I mean, apart from them, of course.

I don't know. That's a good question.... I don't have anything on the horizon....

Book Learning?

They say that there are more books published on chess than pretty much any other individual subject. I wonder how much of that is due to a mistake we have about how chess gets learned. Maybe we are misled by the fact that you can record chess moves and the variations — that you can completely record all of the relevant information about a game on paper, which is something you can't do with, for instance, a hockey [game] or other skills or other competitive endeavors. And so people think, Oh, I can learn chess by studying books like I

would learn a subject in school. But maybe, it only seems that this is the way to learn.

I'm sure you must know people who have spent years and years studying chess books, collecting books, playing through them, paying for lessons... and they don't get any better at all. Maybe getting better at chess requires completely different approach. Maybe a better way to think of it is like learning how to become a carpenter, which nobody would consider doing by books alone, but only through hands-on practice and getting corrected occasionally by a master carpenter, who also learning by doing and not by reading. You think there's anything to this?

I think so. It's going to be a combination, right? Someone's going to show you how to do the carpentry, but then you have to practice it. And the same way, chess, if all you do is read the books. It's not going to say again, but if it's a combination of reading a theory, then practicing it in some fashion.

*But maybe the reading is entirely irrelevant, or contributes only a small percentage to improvement. I know two players, [GM] **Eric Hansen**'s one of them, he told me he hadn't read any chess books on the way to getting titles.*

Yeah, I think there's that school of thought. I remember hearing Anand saying he never reads chess books, but then I think others do. I don't want to get it wrong, I think it's Carlsen, but I've heard that other top players like Svidler do read them.

Carlsen read through the Kasparov books, the My Great Predecessors series.

I think they read them and they may just pick up ideas...

It had to be more than that in Carlsen's case... at least before he got to GM level. I've seen him tested on it in a couple

of the documentaries about him: they show him a position, and he says "Oh, yes, this is Anderssen-Morphy" (or whatever), and he gives you the date to within a year or two, and sometimes the place. You don't do that if you haven't seen [memorized] those games.



Author! Author!

Razvan and David in TO.



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And for all that Anand says he doesn't look at opening books, Kasimdzhanov was his second for like 10 years, and as you were saying Kasimdzhanov has opening openings ideas indexed in his head [and has produced opening DVDs for ChessBase] – so it was a bit like having an walking encyclopedia for an assistant.

I think there's different ways of learning: some people learn visually, and some through words. For me, I can understand something and remember it better if there's words associated with it, a description. And whether that is just to help you remember better or understand it — different people have different ways of learning. So if you can just look at database games and figure it out, that's fine. Other people could look at a video so that you hear someone talking, rather than reading, someone talking and you're watching, or some combination. So that's a good thing about the internet now, and all these other media are different ways of presenting [?]. Personally, I find some more

useful in their own ways.

When you're reading a chess book, do you ever pull out a board anymore and physically move pieces on it?

If I'm going to play it out I tend to do it on the computer. Very often I'll get the ebook version for the iPad...

Yeah, you can just tap tap forward and you have the moving pictures.

...you can play through it; or I'll take the book or the ebook and enter that in my ChessBase, because that way you're physically entering it, so you're doing something that helps you to reinforce it. And then you've got it on record and you can mix it with your other games.

You also have an engine you can use if you have a question about any part of it. I've done that for a bunch them.

Even though it's time consuming, it does help to reinforce.

I find I can't remember until I actually am physically moving the pieces on a board, which I wasn't

doing because it always seems so grossly inefficient. I had to do it that way before there were computers, but then I'd reset the board incorrectly and get a variation wrong... big waste of time. But it seems there's something physical I have to do to learn, and it means I can't blitz through things online just clicking or mouse-wheeling.

You could end up doing it on auto-pilot.

It could be that, or it could be that there's something about it that's not sufficiently kinesthetically involving, and that I can't learn unless I'm moving.

That's another way of learning, by movement isn't it? I think I read that there are four different ways of learning: by movement, by reading, by listening... and, what's the other one?

Visual – looking at pictures or watching and copying, I think... although I don't know how those map onto chess books, which are all both reading text and looking at diagrams. But we're almost all visual and auditory.

I think it's whatever works for you, and then the thing is, if it's not working then don't just stick with it.

Favourite Games

How about some of your favorite games? If you were making a short anthology of say, your six memorable games. This may be one that you can't do off the top of your head.

Yeah....

I like the king hunt game you had from the 4NCL...

Yeah, sometimes it's memorable because of the person you're playing. I think it's often a combination of memorable opponent, and certain tournament-winning games... they might not have been good games, but they're known for their reasons.

Who's the best player you've played in a one-to-one game? Either best by rating or maybe most famous?

I've played people who were famous, but before they became



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well known, like Nigel. I've played Nunn, I've played Speelman a lot of times.

The highest rated player I drew was [John Ludwig Hammer](#), at Reykjavik, he was 2670 at the time.*

How many rating points did you get for that?

About.... four.

[gasps] That's like... nothing!

Well, my k-factor is 10. Because at one point in time I was over 2400, so that means it stays like that for life.

Oh! I didn't realize. I thought it was only while you were over those limits.

No, it stays like that for life. If I lost to him I only lose a point, if I draw I get 4, and if I win I get 9.

That's an enormous number of good decisions you have to make not to lose to somebody with that rating, but the reward is only four points... I mean, the Elo reward — the tournament reward is that you end up play-

ing another strong player.

It's not easy with these players. I was watching an interview with [Rustam Kasimdzhanov](#), and his attention to every detail... the *depth* and the *level*, there's this game and that game.... even though he was unprepared [for those questions]... they're just spontaneously talking about it. Yeah, just the depth of the memory.

It's like they're getting to consult books [in their head]. 😊

I don't have any tricks for memorizing that. I find I feel like I'm understanding lots of the general ideas, but when it comes to precise moves...

On the other hand, that's kind of what they do every day for a job.

Of course; but I've worked as hard at it for few years as they have for longer, and I'm still not anywhere even remotely close. It's like... it doesn't matter what kind of shoes I wear, or who my trainer is, I'm always going to finish five seconds behind Usain Bolt. There's no chance of com-

peting with these guys.

It's good that we can all enjoy it from different angles.

I guess... or resent them. I don't know. 😊

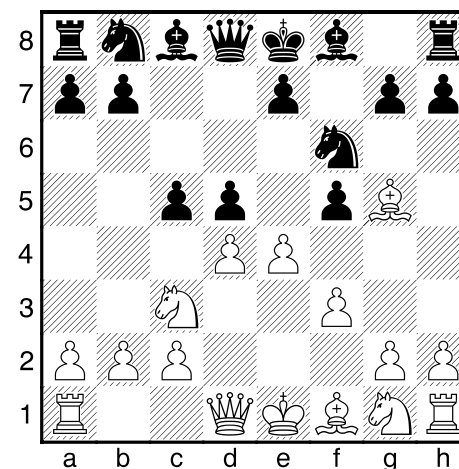
**Notes:
IM David Cummings**

**Cummings, David H
Lyell, Mark (2312)**

A80

4NCL England, 02.05.2015

**1.d4 f5 2.♘c3 ♘f6 3.♙g5 d5
4.f3 c5 5.e4**

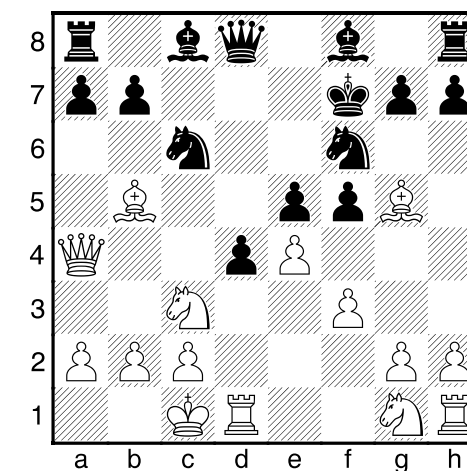


After only 5 moves we have a fairly rare and sharp position, which only gets more crazy in the next few moves.

**5...cxd4 6.♙xd4 ♘c6 7.♙b5
♙f7?**

Black tries to make things "interesting" but it is hard to believe this can be a good move. 7...dxe4 was preferable, when after 8.♙xd8+ ♙xd8 9.fxe4 fxe4 10.0-0-0+ White has good play for the pawn.

8.♙a4 d4 9.0-0-0 e5



Already a critical point of the game. Here I came up with a piece sacrifice based largely on intuition.

10.♙c4+!?

10.f4! was best here, blasting open the position to expose Black's King.

* Megabase 2019 had a game where David beat "Michael Adams" (2660). This has since been fixed to list his actual opponent: Mark Adams, an expert.



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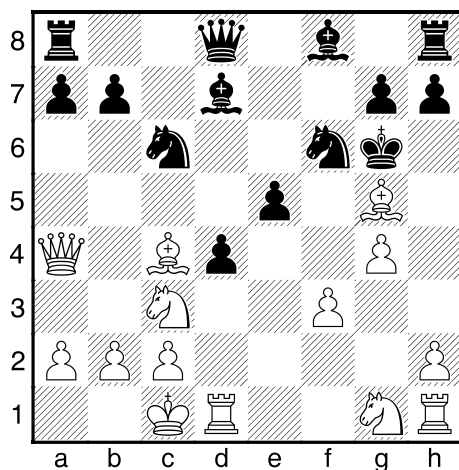
10...♔g6

Black could play 10...♔e8 though unless Black saw that he is losing by force, it would be hard to admit that the whole 7... ♔f7 concept was a mistake.

11.exf5+?! ♙xf5 12.g4 ♘d7?

The real losing move, although after 12...♔xg5 White has the extra resource 13.f4+ with a strong attack.

Now White has two pieces hanging, but...



13.♙b3!

Creates unstoppable threats on the a2-g8 and b1-h7 diagonals.

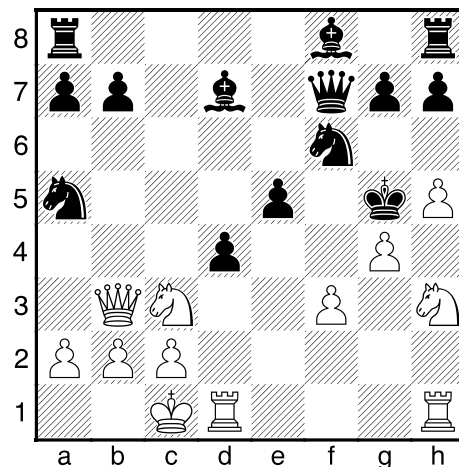
13...♙e8

Black simply can't defend against both threats of 14.♙f7+ and 14.♙d3+. My opponent sportingly plays the resulting

king-hunt out until checkmate is on the board.

14.h4 ♘a5 15.♙f7+ ♔xf7

16.h5+ ♔xg5 17.♘h3+



17...♔h4

17...♔h6 18.g5+ ♔xh5 19.♙xf7+ also mates quickly.

18.♘f2+ ♔g3

Now everything wins of course, but White has a nice mate in 3 with:

19.♘e2+ ♔g2 20.♙dg1+

♔xf2 21.♙h2#

One of my earliest chess books was *The King-Hunt* by W.H.Cozens. It was nice to get to play one in 19th century style!

1-0

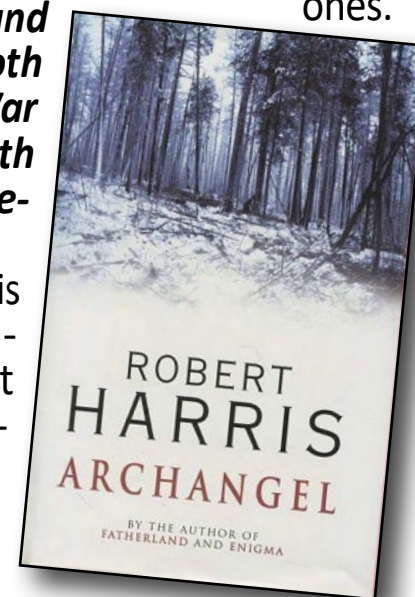
Fiction and Films

How about some non-chess questions, some non-chess authors maybe? Do read much for fun?

Off and on. Have you come across [Robert Harris](#)? British author, he does some political thrillers. There's one called *Archangel*, *Enigma*. He'll write a series on Ancient Rome, on Cicero's biography, but written in the first person in the voice of his assistant. The whole historical thing. Those are good. And then he wrote another one called *Fatherland*, which was imagining that Germany had won [WW2].

Are Archangel and Enigma also both Second World War books, they both sound like code-names...

No. *Archangel* is based in Arkhangelsk, in the Soviet Union. It's the story that Stalin had



a son that was kept hidden for those years, and then there was a movement to bring him back to be the new ruler of Russia.

Is that based on reality?

No, they're all fiction. [laughs]

I can't tell... when it comes to Russia, fiction and facts...

Those are fictions that ring true.

How about movies?

I like some sort of thought-provoking movies, like [Inception](#), for example; and I like the [Sherlock](#) series.

With Benedict Cumberbatch and... the hobbit... [Martin Freeman]....?

Yes, and... [Arrival](#) of the recent ones.

By the Canadian director [Denis Villeneuve]. I haven't seen it. The reviews were great, and my friends who've seen it like it, and so they're looking forward to his Blade Runner sequel.

But I was I was sort of put off because the



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punch line is always supposed to be when you find out what the aliens are really here for, and I don't think any directors come up with an answer that I would be interested in... it's always "to steal our resources" or "the importance of love" or something stupid.

It's hard to come up with a new concept in stories of time travel, but I think they managed to do it. It's very surprising when the plot twist happens; so I recommend it.

OK, I'll try to catch it when it's on Netflix.

[editor - I did. He was right.]

GM Jeremy Silman

The English offers a well-thought opening repertoire for White based on principled lines that are not vulnerable to being refuted by a sharp new move or system...

However there is no free lunch.

Cummings' repertoire requires mastering many more middlegame structures than purely g3 based English systems. They range from the Maroczy Bind to Isolated Queen Pawn positions. While this could be just the ticket for an ambitious player wishing to learn many different types of middlegames, it does require a significant time commitment, much larger than for those who play 1.c4 followed by g3 and Bg2. Accordingly I would primarily recommend this book for players rated 2000 to 2400 USCF.

— Silman, online review.

Links

IM David Cummings

chesspublishing.com
<https://www.chesspublishing.com/content/>

Flank Openings on chesspub
<https://www.chesspublishing.com/content/12/index.htm>

Opening surveys in *New in Chess Yearbooks*:
https://secure.newinchess.com/David_Cummings-sa-919.html

Spassky and Karpov Simuls
Leonard Barden on Spassky simul:

<https://www.ecforum.org.uk/viewtopic.php?t=2763>

<http://streathambrixonchess.blogspot.com/2010/12/when-we-were-kings-xvi.html>

Carlsen's memory

on 60 Minutes:
<https://youtu.be/USTIRy76N18?t=229>

on Anand games:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=acVvkz4MsKc>

Carlsen won the 2015 Reykjavik Chess Pub Triva Quiz:
<https://youtu.be/A-sV6vZWxik?t=647>

Michael Song annotates

<https://chess.ca/newsfeed/node/979>

Film and Video

Arrival, *Inception*, and *Sherlock* are currently streaming on Netflix.

Archangel, starring Daniel Craig is currently streaming on Amazon Prime.

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This past summer, I was able to score my second and third International Master norms, and in the process raise my live rating above 2400, even if only for just a moment, thus attaining the IM title. Here is how it happened...

Montreal

When I was in Montreal planning out the tournaments that I would play, I decided to choose tournaments in cities and countries that I *wanted to visit*, where I would enjoy myself *even if the tournament was not going well*. I think this ultimately took some pressure off me during the tournaments, as the quality of my trip — or the quality of my summer — was not just dependent on how I played, but also on the new experiences that I had and the new cultures that I was exposed to. This mindset really allowed me to enjoy my trips, and probably allowed me to play better chess.

This summer, my travels took me to Iceland, Netherlands, Denmark, Italy, Latvia, back to Italy, and Spain; and I was able to share these experiences with long-time chess friends, and my mom who joined me for a week in Amsterdam, in between tournaments.

Before I played in Europe this summer, I had worked quite a bit on my

chess. I was really fortunate to live minutes away from **Aman Hambleton** and **Eric Hansen** in Montreal, which allowed me to look at chess with them, and see how they approached the game. This really opened my eyes to just how much there is to know about chess, just how complicated and interesting the game is. I used to approach open-

ings by trying to follow what top players played, until I got a position where the computer spat out an evaluation I was happy enough with. Afterwards, in the middle game, I was more or less on my own to try and figure out the resulting plans. By seeing how strong players approached opening preparation, I soon learned that it was much more important to get positions where

I knew what to do, where the ease of finding plans and knowing where my pieces should go was much more important than the computer evaluation. Getting these types of positions, where you really know the resulting plans, takes much more work than ending your analyses with the computer's evaluation, but is really necessary to play chess at a higher level.



Final IM Norm

Michael with third IM Norm certificate in Barcelona.

I also looked at some chess with **David Itkin** over Skype, who joined me on the first leg of the trip, and I found these sessions helpful as well for my chess.

In the months leading up to my trip to Europe, I also played on the **Montreal Chessbrahs** team in the **Pro Chess League**. Each week when I was in the lineup, I got to play against four strong players, in rapid chess. This turned out to be really beneficial for my chess in multiple ways. First, when preparing for my games, I worked on my openings, and after playing my games, had good material to analyze. But what was perhaps a more important, unintended benefit was that *all of the games were published in the Mega Database*, so many of my opening ideas would be known to future opponents. Initially, I didn't think this was ideal, but by virtue of knowing my games were published, I was forced me to keep on developing, to learn new openings and to come up with new ideas, and I think I needed this to make the next jump in my chess.

Reykjavik

My European journey began in Reykjavik, Iceland on a high note, traveling with Aman Hambleton. This tournament was special for both of us, with Aman scoring a GM norm, while I scored an IM norm. Other Canadians flocked over to Reykjavik, so coupled with the fresh Icelandic air, extremely friendly Icelandic people, a beautiful playing venue overlooking the ocean and glaciers, and fantastic organization,

we were surrounded by some usual Canadian chess figures.

[editor - a full report on Reykjavik, with annotations from Hambleton and Team Doknjas, appeared in the previous issue of Chess Canada.]

This tournament was particularly important for me, because I think it solidified my belief that if I were to continue working at my chess, that I would have a good shot of making the IM title. I managed to win a tactical game in Round 5 as Black against

GM Burak Firak, and secured the norm after my round 8 victory. I even had chances for a GM norm if I could win my Round 10 game against GM Erik Blomqvist, but alas, it wasn't quite meant to be.

I've annotated my game against IM Roy Saptarshi from India, because I think it exemplifies my familiarity with the many plans arising from the Black side of the Taimanov, an opening I had worked on before the tournament.

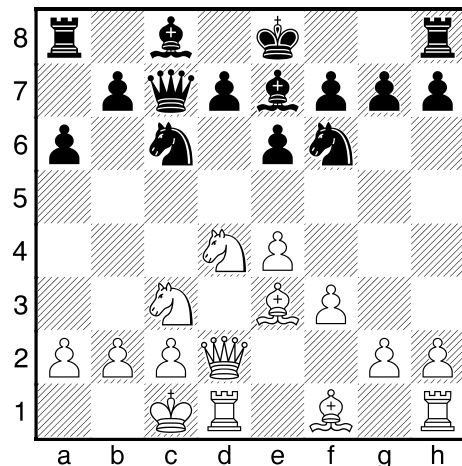
Notes:
IM Michael Kleinman
Saptarshi, Roy (2425)
Kleinman, Michael (2289)
 B48
Reykjavik Open Reykjavik (9),
 26.04.2017

This game was played in round 9 of the Reykjavik Open, and I had secured an IM norm, regardless of the result of this game. I was able to play without pressure, and in this state, I was able to play a pretty good game.

Icelandic Hetero Norms
Michael and Aman with Norm certificates in Reykjavik. photo: VJD



1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4
4.♗xd4 ♘c6 5.♗c3 ♔c7
6.♙e3 a6 7.♔d2 ♗f6 8.0-0-0
♙e7 9.f3



White opts for the English attack against the Taimanov.

9...b5 10.g4

10.♖b1 can lead to interesting complications as can be seen from the following game:

10...♙b7 11.♙f4 e5 12.♗f5 exf4
13.♗d5 ♗xd5 14.exd5 ♗b4
15.c4 ♙d6 16.a3 ♙e5 17.♔xb4
d6 18.cxb5 0-0 19.g3 axb5
20.♙xb5♙ ♔fb8? 21.gxf4 ♙c8
22.♗h6+□+- gxh6 23.fxe5??
(23.♔hg1+! ♙g7 24.♔xg7+!+-)
23...♙f5+□ 24.♖a1 ♔a5
25.♔hg1+ ♙g6 26.♔xd6 ♔xd6
27.exd6 ♔axb5 28.b4 ♔d8♠
29.♖b2 ♔xd6 30.♖c3 ♔bxd5

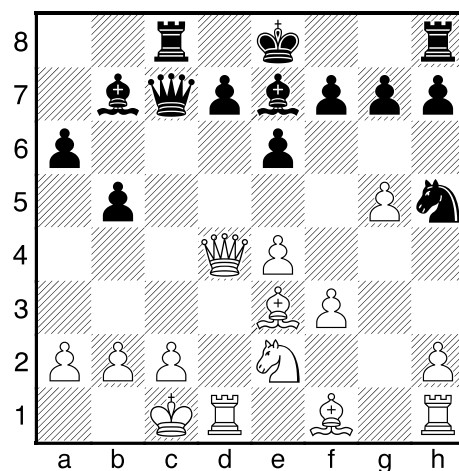
31.♔xd5 ♔xd5 32.♖c4 ♔h5
33.b5= ♔xh2 34.b6 ♖f8 35.♔d1
♖e7 36.♖b5 ♔b2+ 37.♖c6
♔c2+ 38.♖b5 ♔b2+ 39.♖c6
♔c2+ 40.♖b5 ♔b2+ 41.♖c6
(1/2-1/2, 41) **Anand,V** (2785) –
Movsesian,S (2672) Dubai rapid,
2014.

10...♗xd4 11.♔xd4

11.♙xd4 is the main line.

11...♙b7 12.g5 ♗h5 13.♙e5 is
critical.

11...♙b7 12.g5 ♗h5 13.♗e2
♔c8



14.♔d2?!

This position now resembles the
11. ♙xd4 line, with the Bishop
returning to e3, as opposed to
the critical line where it goes to
e5.

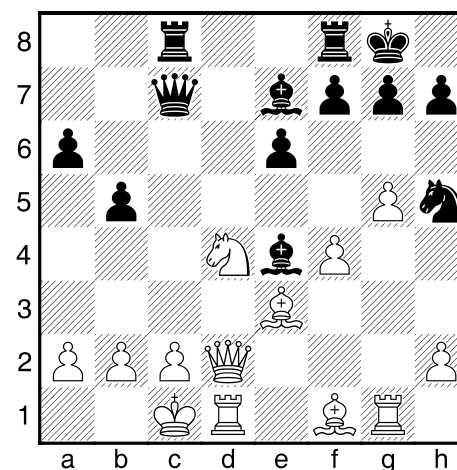
14.♔d2 ♙c5 15.♔d3 ♙xe3
16.♔xe3 ♔c5=.

14...d5 15.f4?!

15.e5 ♔xe5 (15...d4!?) 16.f4 ♔c7
17.♗d4♙;

15.exd5 ♙xd5+- Xa2 and Xf3.

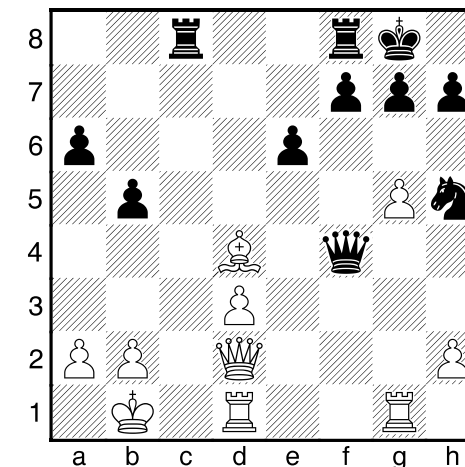
15...d4!? 16.♗xd4 ♙xe4
17.♔g1 0-0



18.♖b1

18.♙g2 was necessary, then
18...♙xg2 (18...♙g6?! 19.♗c6!)
19.♔xg2 ♙c5 20.♔f2 ♔fd8♠.

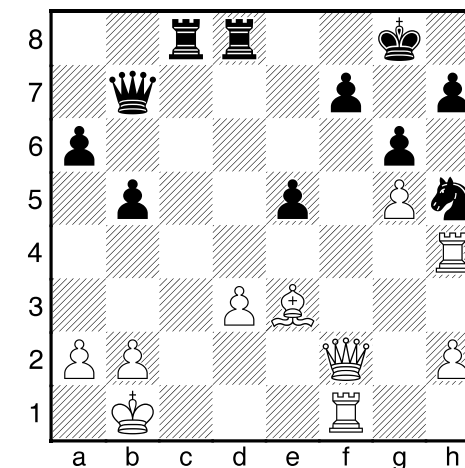
18...♙c5 19.♙d3 ♙xd3
20.cxd3 ♙xd4 21.♙xd4 ♔xf4



Black is up a pawn, and White
does not really have any
compensation.

22.♙e3 ♔f3 23.♔df1 ♔d5
24.♔g4 ♔fd8 25.♔d4 ♔b7
Covering the f7 pawn. Not
25...♔e5? 26.♔f2.

26.♔f2 e5 27.♔h4 g6!



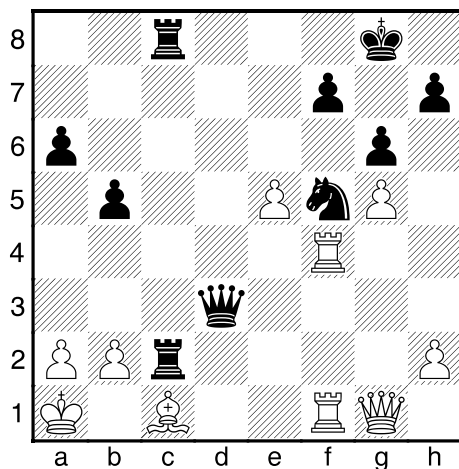
28.d4

28.♖xh5 gxh5 29.♕f6 Here if it were White's move, White could play g6, and it looks like I could get mated on the dark squares, but I have the strong 29... ♔d5! creating threats of my own.

28...♘g7!

Since White's king is so weak, it makes more sense to play for activity as opposed to trying to maintain the material advantage.

29.dxe5 ♘f5 30.♖f4 ♔d5
31.♙c1 ♕d3+ 32.♙a1 ♖c2
33.♕b6? ♖dc8 34.♕g1

**34...♕d5**

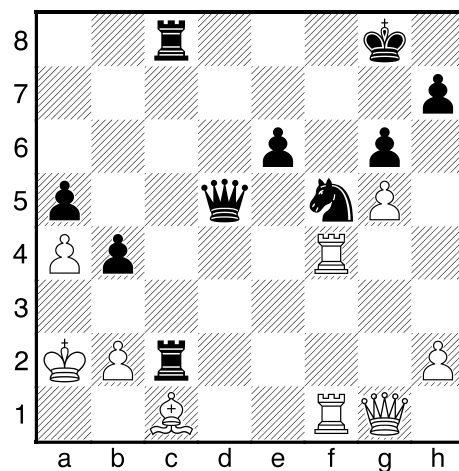
Here the computer suggests bringing in the last piece, the Knight, in a strange fashion: 34...♘d4 35.♙e3 (35.♖xd4 ♕xd4

36.♕xd4 ♖xc1+ and mate.)
35...♘e2 36.♕f2 ♘c1! (36...♘xf4
37.♕xf4-+) 37.♕g1 ♖xb2!
38.♖xc1 ♖cc2! 39.♖xc2 ♕xc2-+.

35.e6 fxe6 36.a3 a5

Opening up the files near the White king.

37.♙b1 ♕d3 38.♙a2 b4
39.a4 ♕d5+



Repeating to reach time control.

40.♙b1

40.♙a1 ♖8c5 (40...♕c5 41.♕xc5
♖8xc5-+) 41.♕xc5 ♕xc5-+.

40...♕d3 41.♙a2 ♖8c3!
42.♙a1

*A friendly battle with David Itkin.
FM Jonas Bjerre in background.
photo: Tournament organizers*

42.♖1f3 ♖a3+ 43.♙b1 ♖xc1+
44.♙xc1 ♖a1#;

42.♕g3!? ♘xg3 (42...♖a3+
43.♙b1 ♖xc1+! 44.♙xc1 ♖a1#)
43.♖f8+ ♙g7 44.♖1f7#.

42...♖a3+

With ♕c3+-b3+-a2 mate to follow on 43. bxa3.

0-1

Copenhagen

I then headed to Copenhagen to meet up with a good friend, David Itkin, to play in the Copenhagen Chess Classic. I've annotated

my last round game against FM Jonas Bjerre, a strong junior from Denmark, and have included it in the report because I feel it had a fairly interesting, non-standard material imbalance.

Notes:
IM Michael Kleinman
Kleinman, Michael (2335)
Bjerre, Jonas (2338)

B85

*Copenhagen Chess Challenge
2017 Ballerup (9.10), 14.05.2017*

This game was played in the last round of the Copenhagen Chess Challenge. I was paired against a young and strong kid

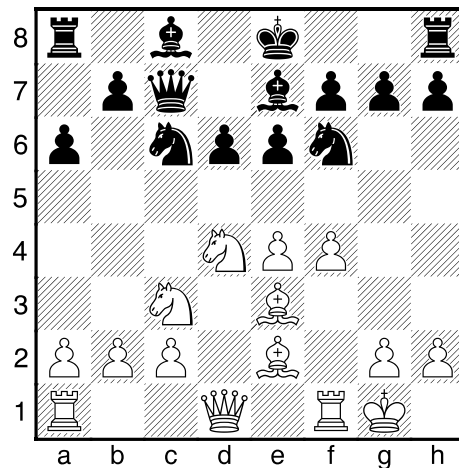


from Denmark. While looking over his games before the round, I was happy to see that his main opening against 1. e4 was the Taimanov since I am familiar with many of the arising positions, being a Taimanov player myself. I decided to annotate this game mainly because it was a lot of fun to play as there were many interesting variations to calculate.

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4 ♘c6 5.♗c3 ♔c7 6.♙e2 a6 7.0-0 ♗f6 8.♙e3 ♙e7

8...♙b4 keeps the game in a more traditional Taimanov feel.

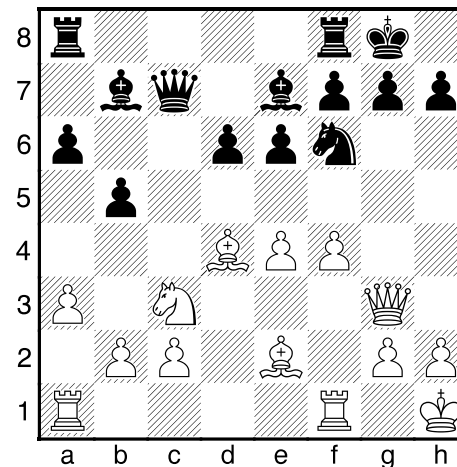
9.f4 d6



In general, it seems to me that

these Scheveningen structures, especially when the b8 knight is already committed to c6, are quite pleasant for White, as White often gets an easy attack with very simple play, while Black needs to defend precisely to maintain the balance.

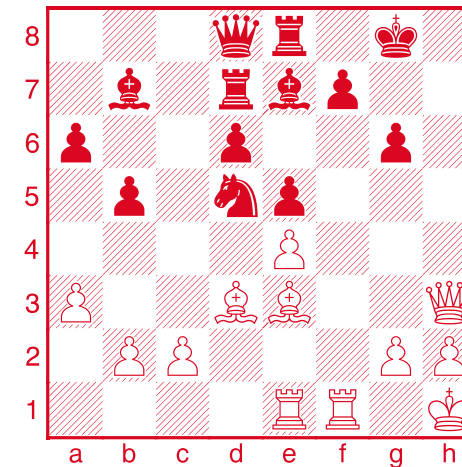
10.♔h1 0-0 11.♔e1 ♗xd4 12.♙xd4 b5 13.a3 ♙b7 14.♔g3



14...♙c6

Wei Yi won a beautiful game after 14. ... ♖ad8, which I have included here for your enjoyment: 14...♖ad8 15.♖ae1 ♖d7 16.♙d3 ♔d8 17.♔h3 g6 18.f5 e5 19.♙e3 ♖e8 20.fxg6 hxg6 21.♗d5 ♗xd5

Analysis Diagram:



22.♖xf7 ♖+/-

editor – The beginning of a by-now-famous king-hunt.

22...♔xf7 23.♔h7+ ♔e6 24.exd5+ ♔xd5 (24...♙xd5 25.♙xg6+/-) 25.♙e4+ ♖xe4 26.♔f7 (26.c4!!) 26...♙f6 27.♙d2+ ♔d4 28.♙e3+ ♔e4 29.♔b3 ♖f5 30.♖f1+ ♔g4 31.♔d3 ♙xg2+ 32.♔xg2 ♔a8+ 33.♔g1 ♙g5 34.♔e2+ ♖h4 35.♙f2+ ♔h3 36.♙e1! there's no good defence to checks on the third rank; 1-0 [Wei,Y \(2724\)](#)–[Bruzon Batista,L \(2669\)](#) Danzhou, 2015.

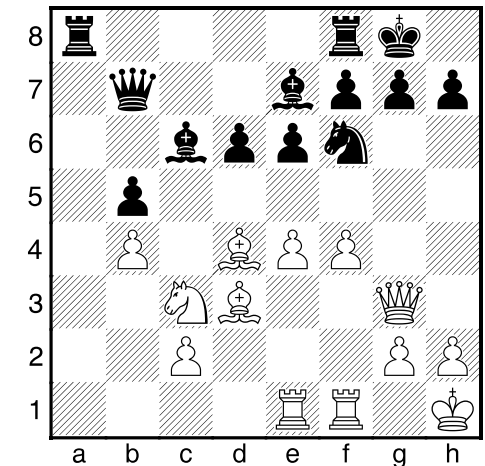
15.♙d3 ♔b7 16.b4

With the direct point of stopping Black's counterplay of ...b4.

16.♖ae1 b4 17.axb4 ♗xb4

18.♗e2 ♔b7 19.e5 ♗h5 20.♔h3 g6 21.♗g3 is the more common continuation, but the direct b4 made more sense to me over the board.

16...a5 17.♖ae1 axb4 18.axb4

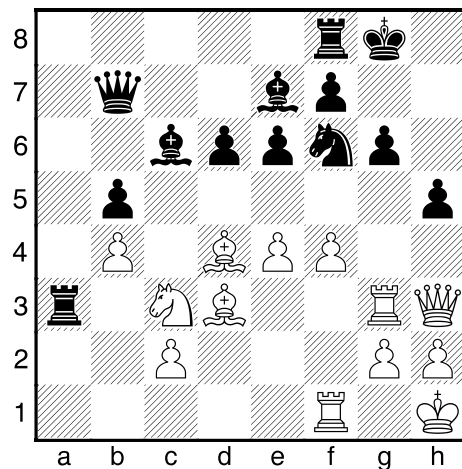


18...g6

This is a useful prophylactic move, as White was planning ♔h3 and e4-e5.

editor – Stockfish and Leela rate ...g6 as an error, inviting an immediate f4-f5; both prefer 18...♖a3!?

19.♔h3 ♖a3 20.♖e3 h5 21.♖g3



21...h4?

Here Black had an only defense, which is aimed at preventing White's play with f5.

21...♞xe4?! 22.♞xe4 ♞xe4
23.♞xh5 e5 (23...♞xg2+
24.♞g1♠+)-) 24.fxe5 ♞xg2+
25.♞g1! was what my opponent mentioned that he overlooked when he played 20... h5.

If Black plays a normal move such as 21...♞fa8? White continues with f5 and the attack is overwhelming. The following is a sample line: 22.f5 e5 23.fxg6 exd4 24.gxf7+ ♞f8 25.♞xh5 ♞xh5 26.♞g8#.

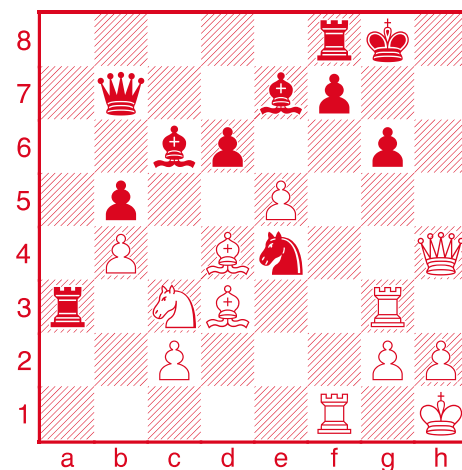
21...♞d7! was Black's only move 22.f5?! e5 and now Black will be

able to trade queens and protect his king.

22.♞xh4 e5 23.fxe5

I think we were both focused on the continuation that occurred in the game, because both my opponent and I missed the important 23.♞h6! which wins on the spot: 23...exd4 24.f5 ♞e8 25.♞d5 and the attack is overwhelming as ♞h3 is a massive threat once the knight on f6 is taken or moves. For instance: 25...♞xd5 26.♞h3+-.

23...♞xe4



24.♞xe4!?

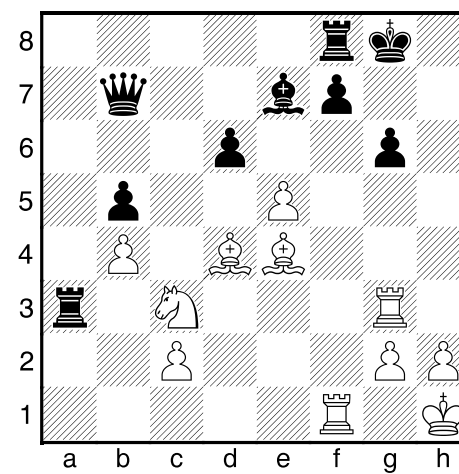
It's not every game where you can sacrifice a queen for two pieces, and for the sacrifice to be sound. In this game, while

interesting, it was unnecessary, as 24.♞h6 won immediately.

editor – Michael is right, ♞h6 does win, but it gives up *two* exchanges, and you have to see through a whole series of back-field sacs... if you can calculate *this*, then maybe *you* can be Canada's next IM:

24.♞h6! (threatens to take on e4 and crack with e6) 24...♞xg3+ 25.hxg3 ♞xg2+ 26.♞g1 ♞xf1 Black is up ♞♞ for ♞ and threatens mate on g2, but... 27.♞e4 stops the mate and gains a tempo on the ♞; Black has no good defence to e6.

24...♞xe4 25.♞xe4



25...♞a6?

Necessary was ...♞d7 Here

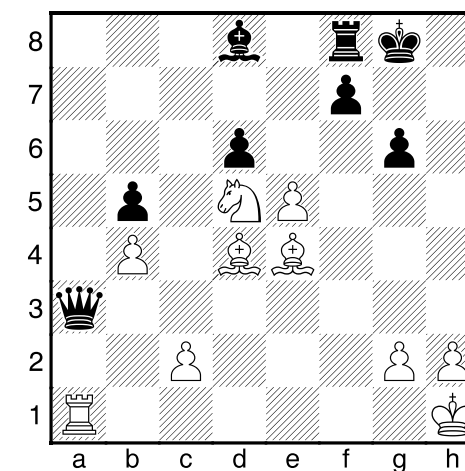
White has a array of options, but in each case, with precise defense, Black is holding. 25...♞d7:

a) 26.exd6 ♞xd6! (26...♞xd6? 27.♞h3+-) 27.♞xb5 ♞xb4 28.♞xa3 ♞xb5=;

b) 26.♞h3 with the idea of moving the e-pawn and mating on h8 26...dxe5 27.♞xe5 f6!-+;

c) 26.e6 ♞xe6 27.♞d5 (27.♞h3 ♞f6! and Black is taking advantage of White's back rank. 28.♞xf6 ♞xf6 29.♞xf6 ♞a1+-) 27...♞xc3 28.♞xe6 ♞xg3 29.♞xf7 ♞xf7 30.hxg3 ♞f8 31.♞xf7 ♞xf7=.

26.♞d5 ♞d8 27.♞xa3 ♞xa3 28.♞a1

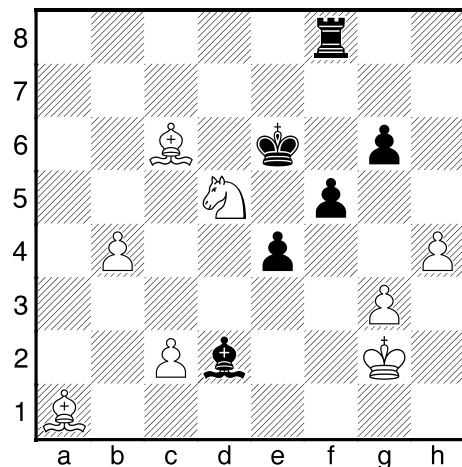


The queen is trapped on a3.

28...♖xa1+ 29.♔xa1+-

White will win the b5 pawn, and the minor pieces coordinate well.

**29...dxe5 30.♔d3 e4 31.♔xb5
f5 32.g3 ♕g5 33.♔c6 ♔d2
34.♔g2 ♔f7 35.h4 ♔e6**



36.♔d4

36.b5 ♔d6 37.♔d4 transposes to the game, and would have been the more technical way of converting the game.

36...♔d6

Immediately after I played 36. ♔d4 I noticed that Black could play 36...♖d8 37.c4 ♔xb4!?, but

fortunately, White can still play 38.♔b6! ♖b8 (38...♖c8 39.♔xb4+-) 39.♔a7+- or 39.♔c7+-.

**37.b5 ♖c8 38.c4
♔c1 39.c5+ ♔e6
40.♔f4+ ♔f7
41.♔d5+ ♔e8
42.b6 ♔a3 43.b7
♖d8 44.♔e5**

1-0



Italy



After Copenhagen, David and I spent a couple days in Rome. While walking to the Vatican, we happened to stumble by a local chess club where some locals were playing chess. It turns out that the **Chessbrah brand** has a global reach, and many players at the club were big fans of the Chessbrah stream and

immediately welcomed us at the club, and later helped show us parts of Rome.

We arrived in Solento, a small town in Southern Italy to play a tournament at a resort, called the Solento Open. The conditions were fantastic; we were right next to the beach, and had delicious Italian meals included at the resort.

My game against **GM Csabo Horvath** was the longest game of my life: we battled for 138 moves, through dinnertime to halfway through the football side event, where I ultimately missed a couple chances to take home the full point. [see PGN] The next morning Csabo was beaming at breakfast, exclaiming to others that “[He] felt like he won the game” by holding the draw, even though he was playing a Canadian FM. I slept through breakfast that morning. Even though I let him off the hook, missing a delicious dinner and football side event in the process, this game was a confidence booster for me — I felt that as long as I could keep applying pressure in drawish posi-

Salento with **GM Roeland Pruijsers**, €300, and medal.

tions, that even strong, experienced Grandmasters, will make mistakes and offer me chances to take home the full point.

To Canada To Europe

I returned to Canada and even though I was happy with my results, I knew that I had used many of the ideas that I had previously worked on, and that again, like after the PRO Chess League, I had to keep on developing. I made a point to learn a solid opening against e4, both as a means of having a more solid option, but also as a way to become more familiar with quieter, positional positions.

Truth be told, I had initially only planned one European trip. I had some research related work that I was planning on focusing on afterwards, but felt that I was playing some pretty good chess, and decided to put the research on hold, and instead focus on chess for the rest of the sum-

mer. While on the first leg of my European trip, I did not have any real expectations, but I definitely booked the second trip with the intention of returning to Canada as an IM, and I think I put in the preparation necessary for this to become a reality. In Toronto, I met up with then FM, and now IM **Shiyam Thavandiran** to look at chess together, and also had a couple lessons with my former coach, GM **Bartek Macieja**, over Skype.

For the second leg, I was joined by a long time friend **Mike Ivanov** from Toronto, and **James Chan** from British Columbia. We decided to play the Fano by the Sea

Open in Italy, the Riga International, and the Barcelona Sants Open. In both the Fano by the Sea Open and Riga International, I gained a bit of rating, won a bit of money, but really did not feel like I was my best chess throughout. I had my moments, but also missed some important chances in some games.

Barcelona

Everything then seemed to click in Barcelona, where I scored my third and final IM norm, and in the process raised my live rating above 2400. At the Barcelona Sants Open, we were joined by

a really good friend of mine and former McGill teammate **Raven Sturt**, and **Joe Roback** from British Columbia. We were all staying in an Airbnb together, a few minutes from the tournament site.

We were actually in Barcelona the day of the terrorist attack, and had on

the same street of Las Rhombas, right where the attack took place the night before. An event like that really puts the game of chess in perspective, reminding you how little the results of our game really matter in the scope of the world. The organizers announced that the tournament would continue as scheduled, and that we would try to continue our lives. We observed a moment of silence before the first round of the tournament, and then started the tournament.

For me, the critical game was in Round 3, as Black against GM Erik Blomqvist, who beat me at the Reykjavik Open in the final round, in the game where I was playing for a GM norm.

Notes:
IM Michael Kleinman
Blomqvist, Eric (2526)
Kleinman, Michael (2340)
B11

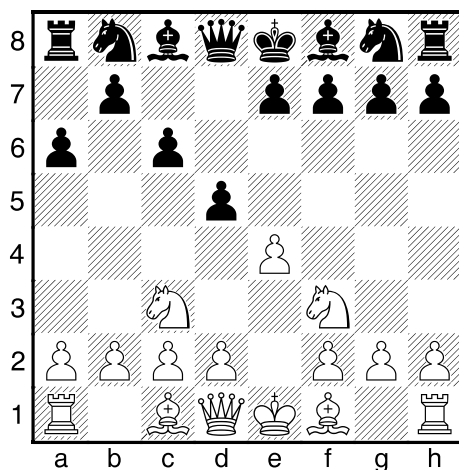
Barcelona Sants Open Barcelona (3), 18.08.2017

My opponent is a very well prepared player, who also plays



the Taimanov (my main opening) as Black himself, so I figured I would have better chances if I could surprise him in the opening. I had looked at the Caro Kann before the tournament, and figured it would be a good time to try it.

1.e4 c6 2.♘f3 d5 3.♘c3 a6



Interestingly, I faced this move in Riga the week before as White when I played Ilja Schneider (2519), and had a lot of problems finding a plan. The purpose of ...a6 is a bit subtle, but prevents ♗b5+ in some lines, thus allowing the light square bishop to develop to g4, followed by developing a very solid structure with ...e6.

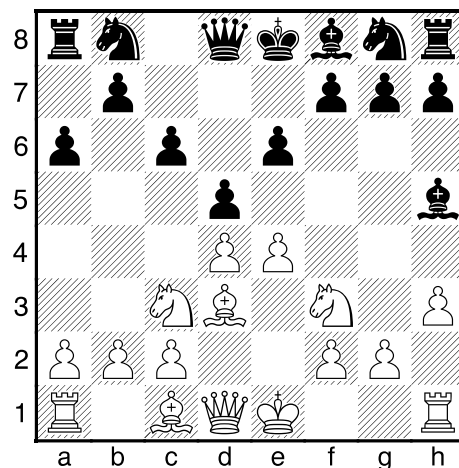
editor – Both ...♗g4 and ...dxe4

are much more common, with lots of examples.

4.d4

Preventing the bishop's development to the g4 square with the direct 4.h3 allows 4...d4!? 5.♘e2 c5 6.b4 ♘c6 7.bxc5 e5 8.♘g3 ♗e6 (1/2-1/2, 45) [Mastrovasilis,D \(2606\)–Tomczak,J \(2588\)](#) Lublin, 2016.

4...♗g4 5.h3 ♗h5 6.♗d3 e6



7.e5

This move is a bit premature – it would make a lot more sense once Black plays ...♘f6.

7.a3 is an alternative:

7...♘f6 8.e5 ♘fd7 9.g4 ♗g6 10.♗xg6 hxg6 11.♘e2 c5 12.c3

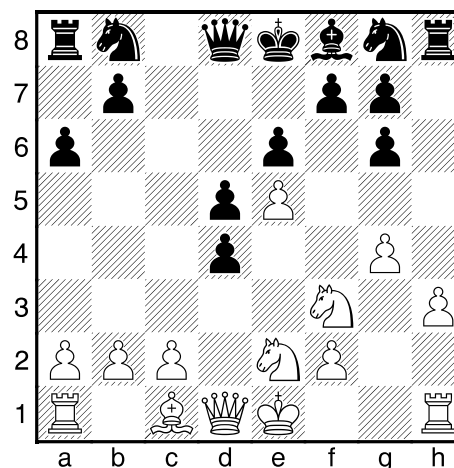
♘c6 13.♔f1 ♗e7 14.♔g2± (1-0, 31) [Berelowitsch,A \(2565\)–Abel,D \(2437\)](#) Germany, 2013.

7...♗e7N 8.♗f4 ♘f6 Once the bishop goes to f4, ...♘f6 seems makes more sense, as Black is not as worried about allowing e5 with tempo.

7...c5 8.g4 ♗g6 9.♗xg6 hxg6 10.♘e2N

10.♗e3 ♘d7 11.♔e2 ♘e7 12.0-0-0 cxd4 13.♘xd4 ♘xe5∞ [Vucinic,G \(2150\)–Ratkovic,M \(2176\)](#) Donji Milanovac, 2012 (0-1, 53).

10...cxd4



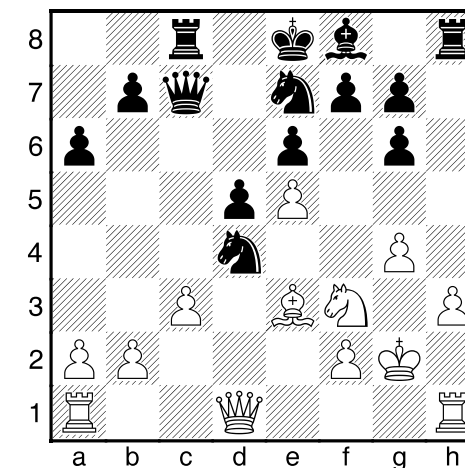
This move is important. If White is able to play c3, we would basically transpose to [Short–](#)

[Khalifman](#) (2001), where Short won a very nice game by putting his king on g2, knight to f4, and advanced the h–pawn.

11.♘exd4 ♘c6

Developing the other knight to c6 via 11...♘e7 12.♔f1 ♘ec6 13.c3 ♘d7 14.♘xc6 bxc6 is probably even stronger for Black.

12.c3 ♘ge7 13.♔f1 ♔c7 14.♔g2 ♖c8 15.♗e3 ♘xd4



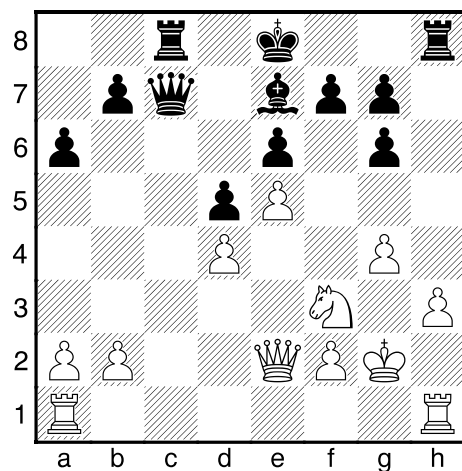
16.♗xd4

16.cxd4 ♔c2 17.♖c1 ♔xd1 18.♖xc8+ ♘xc8 19.♖xd1 ♘e7± followed by ...♘c6.

16.♔xd4 ♘c6 17.♔f4 When we discussed the game afterwards, my opponent mentioned that he did not like this move because

he figured his queen would be awkwardly placed, and that I might have ...f6 at some point. While this is true, he can develop pressure on the kingside, and it would make my play more difficult than it was during the game.

16...♘c6 17.♙e2 ♘xd4
18.cxd4 ♙e7



19.♙e3

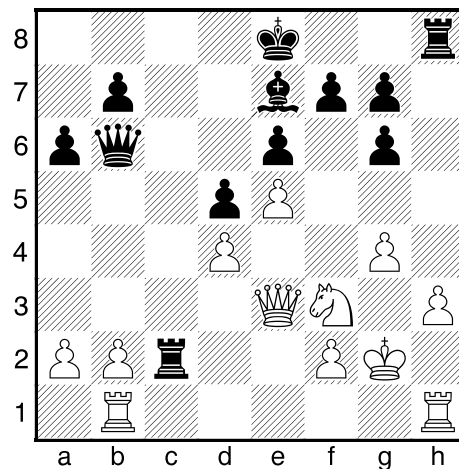
19.♙d2 might have been better as now the c2 square is covered. However this allows an interesting queen vs two rook ending. 19...♙c2!? 20.♖ac1 ♙xd2 21.♖xc8+ ♔d7 22.♖xh8 ♙xb2∞.

19...♙b6 20.♖ab1

20.♖ac1 ♖xc1 21.♖xc1 ♙xb2

transposes to the line analyzed instead of 23. a4.

20...♖c2 21.♙d3 ♙c7 22.♙e3
♙b6



23.a4?

White was not really in a position to deny the repetition, and should have continued with 23. ♙d3 when Black can continue the game with 23...♙c6 or repeat with ...♙c7.

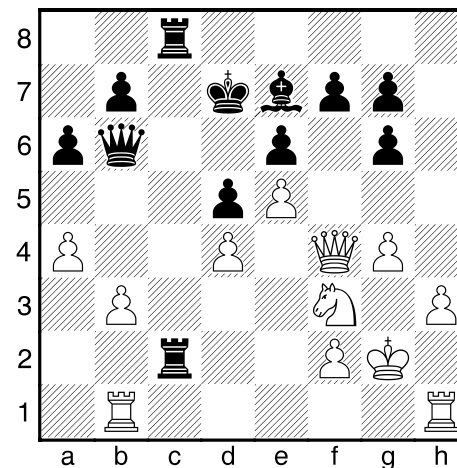
White alternatives are bad:

23.♖hc1 ♖xb2 24.♖xb2 ♙xb2
25.♖c8+ ♙d8 26.♘g5 0-0 27.♙f4
♙xg5 28.♖xf8+ ♔xf8 29.♙xg5
♙b6⌘;

23.♖bc1 ♖xc1 24.♙xc1 ♔d7
25.♙f4 (25.b3 g5) 25...♙xb2
26.♙xf7? ♖f8 27.♙xg6 ♙e2+.



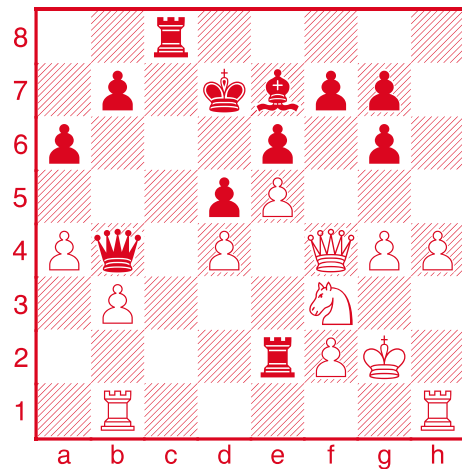
23...♙d7 24.b3 ♖hc8 25.♙f4



25...♙b4

25...g5! would have basically won on the spot. 26.♙xf7 (26.♙e3? ♖8c3-+ followed by rook taking on f3 or b3.) 26...♖f8 27.♙g6 ♖c3! Somehow, I didn't consider this move as I wanted to keep the rook on the second rank. I played ...♙b4 so that ...♙c3 would be possible after 26. ♙xf7. 28.♘g5 ♖xf2+ 29.♔xf2 ♙xd4+ 30.♔g2 ♙d2+ and the white king will soon be mated.

26.h4 ♖e2



27.♔xf7??

27.♖he1! is necessary, so that ...♖e4 is not possible. Play might continue 27...♖xe1 28.♘xe1 ♔e8 (28...♙xh4? 29.g5±) 29.♘d3 ♖b6±.

27...♖f8 28.♔xg6 ♖xf2+
editor – Only move to win, and what White must have missed.

29.♔xf2 ♖d2+

0-1

Final Norm?

In round 8, in a game that would ultimately guarantee me the third norm, rating, and title, I

was playing on the White side against IM Nicholas Brunner from France. In this game, I actually played a new line against 2... d6 in the Sicilian, and it really paid off.

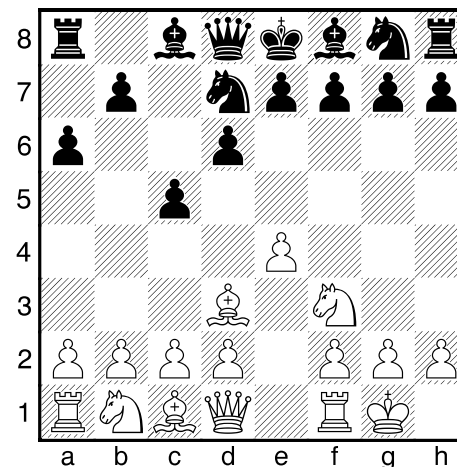
Notes:
IM Michael Kleinman
Kleinman, Michael (2340)
Brunner, Nicolas (2472)
B51
Barcelona Sants Open Barcelona (8), 24.08.2017

This game was played in round 8, and I was in the fortunate position that a win would secure me the IM norm and would push my live rating above 2400, whereas a draw would have likely been enough to secure the IM norm, but would have left me a few points below 2400.

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.♙b5+
In the past, I have almost exclusively opted for the sideline of 4. ♖xd4 against 2... d6, 3.d4 cxd4 4.♖xd4 but, while the positions are comfortable for White, it is nowadays very

difficult to fight for an opening advantage there against a well-prepared Black player.

3...♘d7 4.0-0 a6 5.♙d3



Carlsen played this against Svidler in 2013, and this position has become the *tabiya* of 3. ♙b5+ ♘d7. White's idea is to develop a strong center after c3-♙c2-d4.

5...♘gf6 6.♖e1 e6
6...b5 7.c4 g5!? is another interesting variation.

7.c4

This was played by Shanglei Lu against Wei Yi a few weeks before my game, and I wanted to try it out. The point is to aim for a hedgehog after ♘c3, ♙f1, and

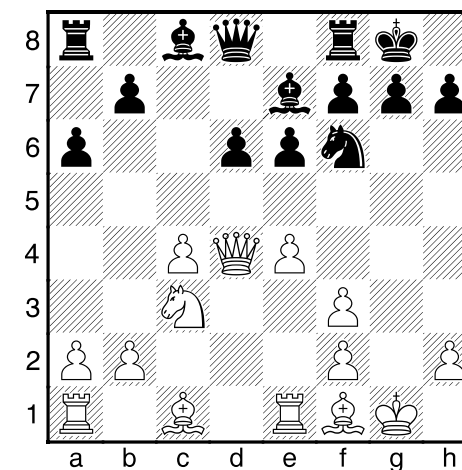
d4.

7.c3 is by far the main move, but Black has been doing well after 7...b5 8.♙c2 c4! hindering the d4 advance.

7...♘e5 8.♙f1 ♙e7 9.♘c3 0-0
10.d4!?

10.d3 seemed a bit slow to me. 10...♖b8 11.♙f4 (11.h3 b5) 11...♘g6 12.♙g3 e5 and the bishop would be misplaced on g3.

10...♘xf3+ 11.gxf3 cxd4
12.♖xd4



This is quite a unique hedgehog with double f-pawns, but it is difficult for Black to take advantage of them. Ideally, Black would want to take advantage of the weakened king by placing

the knight on an active square such as f4, or on g4 if White is to advance the pawn from f3. In contrast to a typical hedgehog, White has the advantage of having a pawn along the g1-a7 diagonal which makes the king quite a bit safer, and potentially mobile f and e pawns, as well as options to activate the light square bishop via g2, which usually stays on f1 in a normal hedgehog.

12...♔a5

12...e5 13.♔d3 ♕e6 14.f4 and we can see the advantage of having double f-pawns.

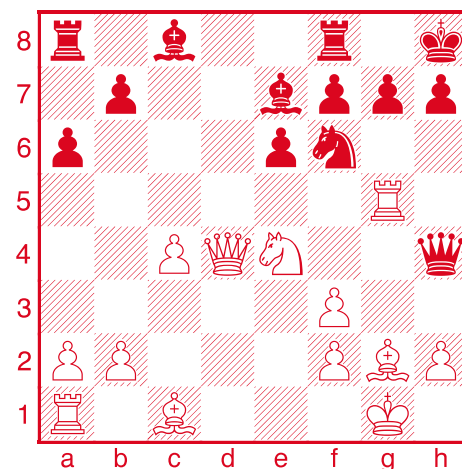
13.♕g2 ♕d7

13...b5 14.cxb5 axb5 15.b4±;

Rerouting the queen to h5 is very dangerous for Black as the queen has very few squares, as can be seen from the following lines: 13...♔h5 14.e5 dxe5 15.♔xe5 ♔g6 16.♔g5 ♔h6 17.♔g3 (White has the option of repeating 17.♔e5 ♔g6 18.♔g5)

17...♔h5 18.♘e4 (18.♕g5! is the computer's suggestion, and also a very natural move) 18...♔h8 (18...♔d8 19.♔xf6+-) 19.♔g5 ♔h4

Analysis Diagram:



20.♔xg7!! *editor* – this is the computer's preposterously complicated top line:

a) 20...♔xg7 21.♕g5 ♔h5

22.♕xf6+ ♕xf6 23.♔xf6+ (23.♘xf6?? ♔g5∞) 23...♔g8 24.♔c3!+- clearing f6 for the ♘.

b) 20...♘xe4 21.♔xf7+ ♕f6 22.♔xf8+ ♔g7 23.♔xf6!+- the ♘e4 is pinned to the ♔, so White ends up a piece ahead.

c) 20...♔d8! 21.♘xf6 ♕xf6 (21...♔xd4?? 22.♔g8#; 21...♔xf6 22.♔xf6 ♕xf6 23.♔xf7+/-) 22.♔xh4 ♔d1+! 23.♕f1 ♕xh4 24.♔xf7 (making the ♔ safe and threatening ♔f8+ then ♕h6+) 24...♕d7! 25.♔g2 (25.♔xd7?? ♔g8+ mates.; 25.♕f4?! ♔xa1 26.♕e5+ ♔g8 27.♔g7+ ♔f8= and takes on d7 or h7.) 25...♔g8+ 26.♔h3 ♕xf2 27.♕f4! unpinning the ♕c1 by threatening mate 27...e5+ ♕ preventing mate

via discovered check 28.♔xd7 ♔xd7 29.♕xe5+ ♔gg7± White emerges with two extra pawns in an opposite ♕ ending.

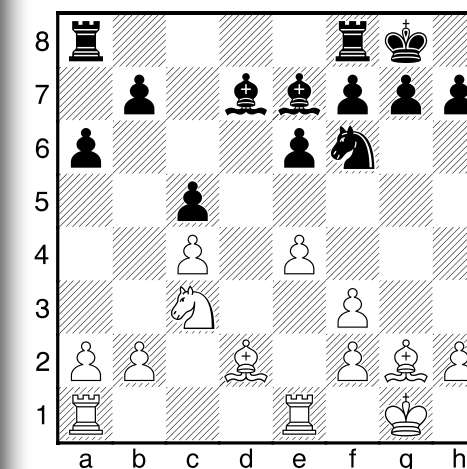
14.♕d2 ♔c5

14...♔h5 15.e5 is similar to 13...♔h5;

14...♔c7 might be the best square for the queen, but it is difficult to play such a move after already playing ...♔a5;

14...e5 15.♔d3 (The immediate 15.♘d5 does not quite work: 15...♘xd5 (15...♔xd5 16.exd5 exd4 17.♔xe7=) 16.♕xa5 exd4=) 15...♘h5 16.♘d5 ♔d8 17.♕a5 ♔xa5 18.♘xe7+ ♔h8 19.♔xd6 ♕e6 20.♘d5±.

15.♔xc5 dxc5



2016 McGill Open
board 1 vs Olivier Kenta

16. ♖g5

Objectively, this move is inaccurate, but I wanted to exchange off my dark square bishop before advancing my pawns to e5 and f4.

The logical 16.e5 ♘e8 (16... ♘h5 17.f4 ♖ab8 18. ♖f3±) 17.f4 ♖b8 led to a position that I had misevaluated during the game. I thought Black would continue with ...g6, and ... ♘g7, thereby solving all of his problems, but Black does not have time for this as the Bishop on d7 does not have many squares. 18. ♖ad1

g6 19. ♖e3± ♖c8 (19... ♖c6 leads to a horrible structure 20. ♖xc6 bxc6 21.b3+-) 20. ♘a4 b6 21.b4 and White is crashing through on queenside, while Black is underdeveloped.

16...h6 17. ♖xf6 ♖xf6

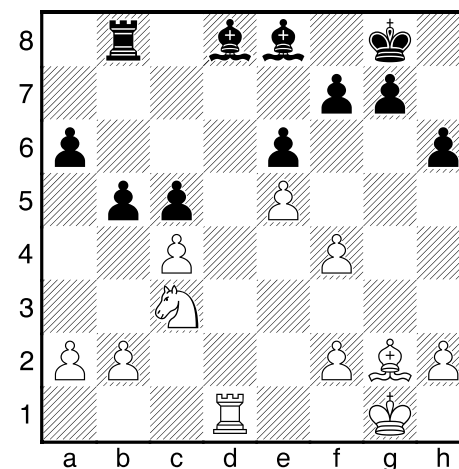
17...gxf6!? is also possible.

18.e5 ♖e7 19. ♖ad1

The immediate 19.f4 would give Black the extra option of 19... ♖fb8 20. ♖ad1 ♖e8.

19... ♖fd8 20.f4 ♖ab8 21. ♖e2 b5

The slow 21...b6 is met by 22. ♖ed2 ♖e8 23. ♖xd8 ♖xd8 24. ♖b7 a5 and Black's queenside is weakened.

22. ♖ed2 ♖e8 23. ♖xd8 ♖xd8**24. ♘e4**

24. ♖b7 was my original idea. It works after 24... ♖xb7? 25. ♖xd8 ♖f8 26. ♘e4 ♖e7 (26... ♖e7 27. ♖xe8+-) 27. ♘d6 and Black is in zugzwang. But Black is probably better after the precise 24...bxc4 25. ♖xa6 ♖a5!

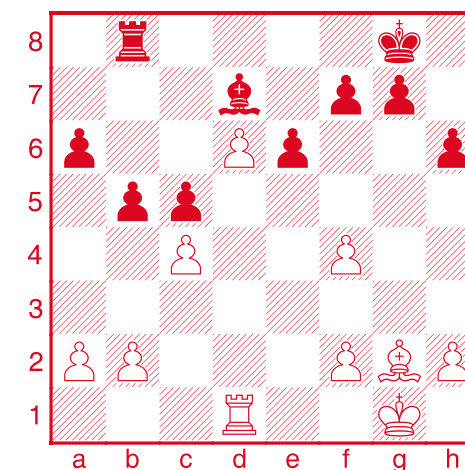
24... ♖e7

24...bxc4! was necessary 25. ♘xc5 (25. ♘d6? ♖a4! 26. ♖d2 ♖a5 27. ♖e2 ♖d1+-) 25... ♖e7 26. ♘b7∞.

25. ♘d6 ♖xd6?

editor – White's 27th shows why this is probably the losing move.

25... ♖d8 26.b4! cxb4 27.c5±; 25... ♖f8 26.b4!?∞; 25...bxc4 is probably still necessary, 26. ♘xc4 ♖b5 27. ♘d6.

26.exd6 ♖d7**27.b4!**

editor – without the previous capture on d6 this would support the ♘, but not create a deadly pair of passed pawns.

27... ♖c8

27...cxb4 28.c5 ♖c8 29.c6 ♖xc6 30. ♖xc6 ♖xc6 31.d7+-; 27...bxc4 28.bxc5 c3 29. ♖c1 (29. c6?? c2 30. ♖c1 ♖b1 31.cxd7

**2014 Harbourfront Blitz**

MK, Sambuev, Gerzhoy, Ivanov, Preotu

A little help from my friends...

Overall, I've found that to improve in chess, it's really important to always be open to learning, from anybody, regardless of their title. I've worked with three coaches over the course of my life, starting with FM

game to put pressure on Grigoryan, but misevaluated a position where I would have an active rook and two pawns for two pieces. Immediately afterward, he showed me how I could have played, making sure to beat me in the analysis room, as well as over the board. That said, I was still pleased with achieving the International Master title, even though I knew missed good chances for a GM norm.

34...♖a8 35.f3!

This move dislodges the Bishop from its ideal square on c6 by preparing ♗e4, and also makes space for the king.

35...♗xf3

35...♔f8 36.♗e4 ♗xe4 37.fxe4+-; 35...f5 36.♗c4+-.

36.♗b5 ♖xa2 37.d7 ♖d2

38.♖xc3 ♗e4 39.♗d3

1-0

Like Reykjavik, after securing the IM norm with a round to spare, I had chances to play for a GM norm, as Black against GM Grigoryan from Armenia. I had chances in this

♖xc1+ 32.♗f1 ♖xf1+ 33.♔xf1 c1♖+--+ and Black can stop the pawns.) 29...c2 30.♗e4!+-.

28.♗b7 ♖b8 29.♗g2

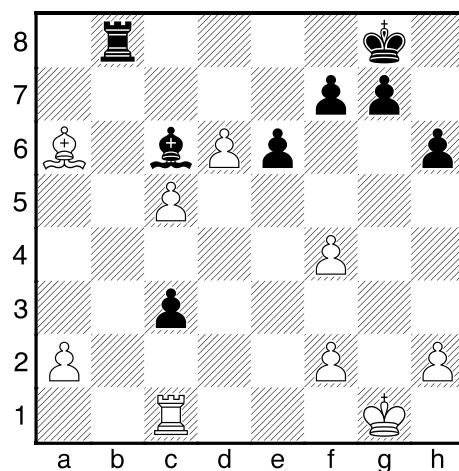
Repeating to get closer to time control.

29...♖c8 30.♗b7 ♖b8

31.♗xa6 bxc4

31...cxb4 32.c5 followed by ♖d4-xb4 should win. Not 32.♗xb5? ♗xb5 33.cxb5 ♔f8 might be OK for Black.

32.bxc5 c3 33.♖c1 ♗c6



34.♗d3

34.♖xc3 ♖b1+ 35.♗f1 ♗b5 is Black's point. Even here, White actually still wins with 36. ♖b3, but there is really no point to allow this.

2015 CUCC

3-peat University Champs McGill:

Raven Sturt,
Keith MacKinnon,
Felix Dumont, MK.



Yura Otchkoos when I was very young, to IM **Yan Teplitsky**, and finally to GM **Bartek Macieja**, who I worked with for two years during high school, and briefly during the past summer, when I wanted to cover all my bases and give myself the best chance of getting the IM title. Bartek really made me a much more complete player; a major focus of our initial lessons was on technical endgames, which he initially thought was completely lacking from my play, lacking knowledge of very fundamental positions. This aspect of my game turned from a major weakness to a strength. Now, it's probably the part of the game that I most enjoy, combining precise calculation, knowledge of theoretical positions, focus and

willpower, as it occurs hours into a game when both players are tired.

I've also been fortunate to look at chess with strong players; I was surrounded by strong players at the **McGill Chess Club** such as **Keith Mackinnon**, and **Raven Sturt**, which kept me thinking about chess during my undergraduate studies. Raven and I had some pretty epic one min-

ute battles in the McGill Trotter cafeteria, and I'm not going to reveal the scores, but let's just say, I did not end up on top, and they definitely motivated me a bit. I also lived minutes away from **Aman and Eric** in Montreal, and talking and looking at chess with them really helped my game. I also looked at some chess with **David Itkin**, **Mike Ivanov**, and **Shiyam Thavandiran**, and I think

I learned something different from each of them. Most of all, I think what helped me make the next jump was an openness to learn new positions, and to try and learn something new from many different players.

I think I learned a lot about chess in the course of earning the IM title, and am really starting to appreciate just how complicated and beautiful the game of chess is. Like in other fields, there is truth to the saying, "The more you know, the more you realize you don't know." I'm hoping that I'll be able to continue learn a bit more about the game, and perhaps, someday, I'll earn the game's highest title.

– IM Michael Kleinman

2013 Canadian Open

Roman Sapozhnikov, Aman Hambleton, Arthur Calugar, Ben Blum, Michael Kleinman, David Itkin.

(now: FM, GM, IM, and IM)



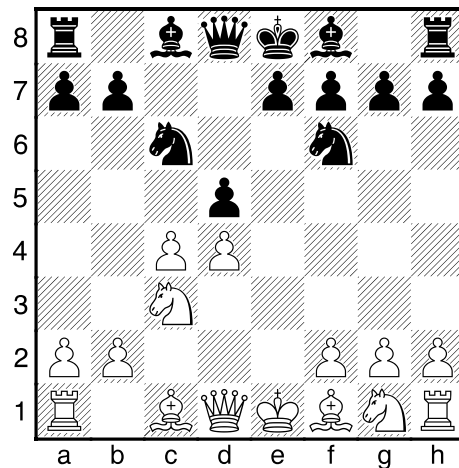
Kleinman, Michael (2289)
Vigorito, David (2370)
E57

2017 CCCSA GM/IM Norm Invitational Charlottesville (2),
 30.03.2017

Notes: John Upper

A Caro-Kann Panov-Botvinnik attack turns into a standard IQP position where White gets a very strong, and very thematic, sacrificial attack on the light squares.

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 cxd5
 4.c4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 ♘c6

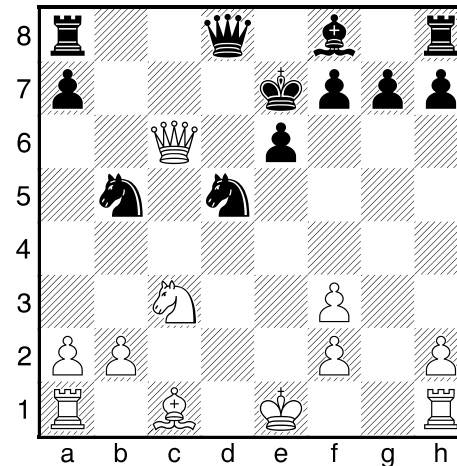


6.♕g5

White's most combative move.

6.♘f3 ♕g4 7.cxd5 ♘xd5 8.♖b3

is the start of the well-worn "Endgame Variation", which continues 8...♕xf3 9.gxf3 e6 10.♖xb7 ♘xd4 11.♕b5+ ♘xb5 12.♖c6+ ♔e7 Analysis Diagram:



Black is reckoned to be OK, but here's a crazy recent result to remind White players to stay alert: 13.♖c5+ ♔e8 14.♖xb5+ ♖d7 15.♘xd5 exd5 16.♖b3 ♕d6 17.0-0 ♖b8 18.♖e3+ ♔f8 19.♖d1?? ♖h3 White resigned, since f4 is the only move to prevent mate, but loses the ♖d1 to ...♖g4+; 0-1 Riazantsev,A (2671) – Jakovenko,D (2709) Sharjah, 2017.

6...dxc4 7.♕xc4

7.d5 ♘e5 8.♖d4 h6!∞.

7...h6!

It's risky to take the d-pawn 7...♖xd4 8.♖xd4 ♘xd4 9.0-0 e5 10.f4 ♕g4 11.♘f3 ♕xf3 12.gxf3∞ When White has a significant lead in development; e.g. Mamedyarov,S (2736)–Sethuraman,S (2640) Baku, 2015 (1-0, 41).

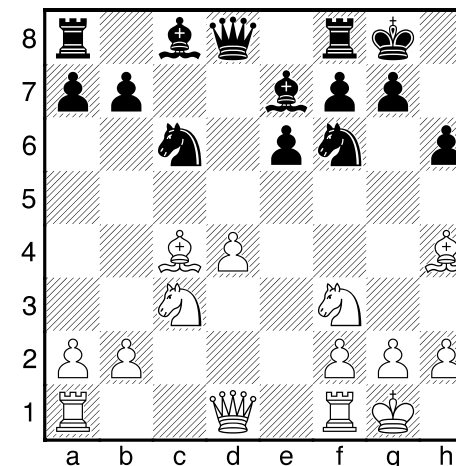
8.♕h4

8.♕e3 is a much less dynamic way of using the IQP, 8...e6 9.♘f3 ♕d6 10.0-0 0-0 11.♖d2 ♘e7! 12.♖ad1 a6 13.♕d3 ♘f5 14.♕f4= (1½-1½, 30) Kamsky,G (2740)–Eljanov,P (2678) Moscow, 2013.

8...e6

Safer than ...♖xd4, as at move 7.

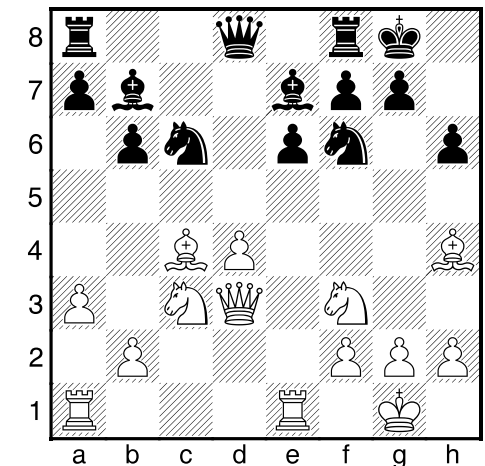
9.♘f3 ♕e7 10.0-0 0-0



11.a3!

11.♖c1 b6 12.♕d3 ♕b7 13.♕b1 ♖c8 14.♖e1 ♖e8 15.a3 ♘h5 16.♖c2 ♕xh4 17.♖h7+? (♠17. d5!) 17...♔f8 18.d5 ♕g5?? (18...♘d4! 19.♘xd4 ♕xf2+ 20.♔xf2 ♖h4+-) 19.♖cd1 ♖f6 20.d6 g6 21.♘xg5 ♖cd8 (21... hxg5 22.♘e4+-) 22.♘xe6+!+- 1-0 Naiditsch,A (2674)–Eljanov,P (2761) Sibenik, 2010.

11...b6 12.♖d3 ♕b7 13.♖fe1



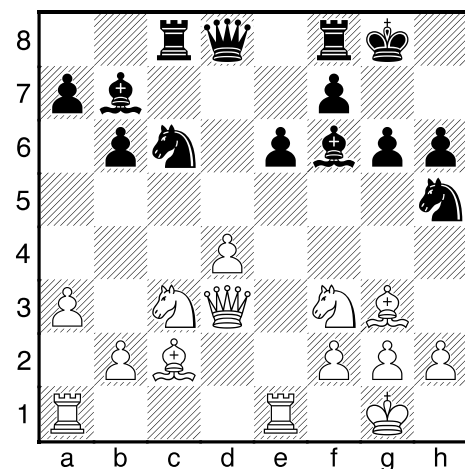
A nearly standard IQP position, which can also arise out of an e3-Nimzo. ...h6 (rather than ...g6 to defend a battery along the b1-h7 diagonal) weakens Black's kingside light squares, which White exploits nicely.

13...♖c8

13...♖h5 14.♔g3 ♗xg3 15.hxg3
♕f6 16.d5 exd5 17.♗xd5 ♕xb2?!
(17...♔h8 (1-0, 82) **Kobalia,M**
(2666)–**Riazantsev,A** (2689)
Moscow, 2011.) 18.♖ad1 ♖a5?
19.♗e7+! ♔h8 20.♖f5 ♖+- ♖xd1
(20...♖c7 21.♗g5!+-) 21.♖xd1
♕xf3 22.♕d3 1-0 **Gulko,B** (2533)
–**Krush,I** (2489) Rockville, 2013.

14.♕b3 ♗h5! 15.♕g3
15.♕xe7 ♗xe7 16.g3 (16.♖ad1?
♗f4 17.♖e3 ♗xg2! 18.♔xg2 ♗f5
19.♖f4 ♗h4+-+ or 19...g5-+)
16...♗f6 Black is well-placed to
play against the IQP.

15...♕f6 16.♕c2 g6



17.♖xe6!∞ ♗xg3
17...fxe6?? 18.♖xg6+ ♗g7
19.♗e5!+- Δ♕xe5 20.♖h7+
♔f7 21.♕g6+ ♔e7 22.dxe5+-

threatening ♖xg7 and ♕h4+.

17...♗xd4! is playable and
unclear:

a) 18.♖xf6?! ♗xc2 19.♖d6!
(19.♖xg6+ looks tempting, but
Black is better after 19...fxg6
20.♖xg6+ ♗g7 21.♖xc2 ♕xf3+
19...♗xa1 20.♖xd8 ♖fxd8∞;

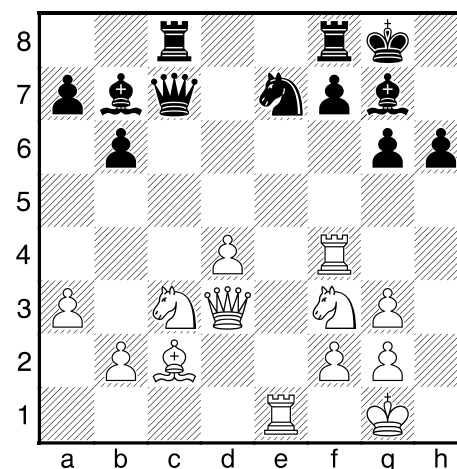
b) 18.♖d6 ♗xf3+ 19.gxf3 ♖e8!∞;

c) 18.♗xd4 ♖xd4 19.♖xd4 ♕xd4
20.♖e7 ♕xc3 21.bxc3 ♖xc3
22.♕xg6=.

18.hxg3 ♕g7 19.♖e4 ♗e7
20.♖f4

Stopping ...♗f5, which would
lose to ♖xf5.

20...♖c7 21.♖e1

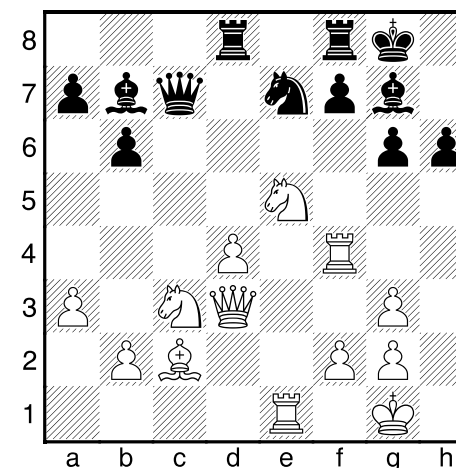


21...♖cd8?!

Δ21...♗d5 22.♗xd5 ♖xc2
23.♗e7+ (23.♗f6+∞) 23...♔h7∞.

22.♗e5

22.♗b5! ♖d7 23.♗e5 ♕xe5
(23...♖e6 24.♕b3+-) 24.♖xe5±.



A tense position: Black has the
IQP blockaded and targeted, but
White has a lot of pieces pointed
at the black ♔.

22...♗c6?

Δ22...♗d5 forking c3 and f4,
23.♖h4 ♗xc3± (23...a6 24.♕b3±)
;
22...♕xe5 23.♖xe5 ♖xe5 24.dxe5
♖xd3 25.♕xd3± and White is up
a safe pawn.

23.♖c4±

Pinning c6 and f7 is good, but

not nearly the best.

23.♗xf7!!+- this second strike
on the light squares would end
the game: 23...♖xf7 (23...♖xd4
24.♖xg6+- is mating.) 24.♕b3
♗e5 25.♖xe5 ♕xe5 26.♖xg6+-
with total ownership of the light
squares.

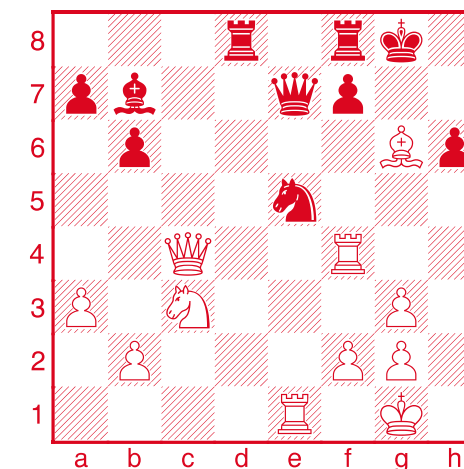
23...♖e7

Pinning the ♗ to e1.

24.♕xg6! ♕xe5

24...♗xe5 25.dxe5 ♖c8 26.♖b3
♖c5 27.♕b1 ♖xe5 28.♖xe5
♖xe5 29.♖c2 ♖d8 30.♖h7+ ♔f8
31.♕a2+- White is up a pawn
with Black's kingside broken.

25.dxe5 ♗xe5



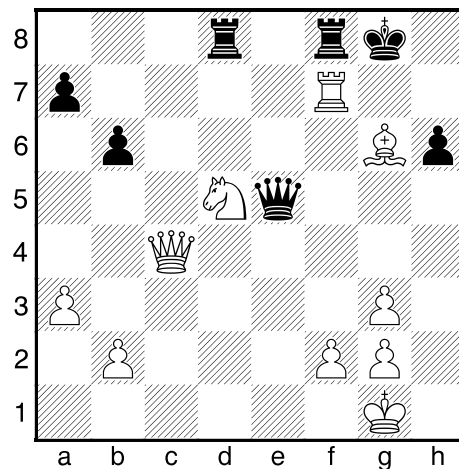
26.♖xe5??

Giving away most of White's advantage.

26. ♖xf7+! ♔h8 (26... ♖xf7 27. ♖xe5 ♖xc4 28. ♖xc4 and White is up two pawns with a much safer ♔.) 27. ♖e2 ♖xf7 28. ♖xf7 ♖xf7 29. ♖xe5+- also with an extra two pawns and huge initiative.

26. ♖xf7!! putting yet a third piece *en prise* to the ♘ would have been a worthy finish: 26... ♘xc4 (26... ♖xf7 27. ♖xe5 ♖+-) 27. ♖exe7 ♖fe8 (27... ♖xf7 28. ♖xf7+ ♔f8 29. ♖xb7+-) 28. ♖g7+ ♔h8 29. ♖h7+ ♔g8 30. ♖eg7+ ♔f8 31. ♖xb7+-.

26... ♖xe5 27. ♖xf7 ♖d5
28. ♘xd5



28... ♖xd5??

28... ♖xf7 29. ♖xf7+ ♔xf7± and there are no particularly useful discovered checks.

29. ♖c7 ♖+- ♖fe8

29... ♖xf7 30. ♖xf7+ ♖xf7
31. ♖xd8+-.

30. ♖g7+ ♔f8 31. ♖h7

1-0

links

Michael scored his second IM Norm at the Reykjavik Open in April. You can play through his win there over GM Burak Firat (2503, Turkey) — and find a link to **Michael's video commentary** on it with WIM Fiona Steil-Antoni — on the CFC Newsfeed: <http://chess.ca/newsfeed/node/955>

YouTube Video Analysis of his win over IM Martin del Campo at Charlotte, 2017: <https://youtu.be/54JQdlySiQI>

Kleinman - Vigorito, Charlotte, 2017 analysis first appeared on the CFC Newsfeed: <http://chess.ca/newsfeed/node/951>

Michael is one of the original **McGill Chess Team** members who contributed to the **CFC Newsfeed** from its start in 2013 to 2016. You can find some of his annotations by going through the "GOTW" links, including:

Song - Preetu, Hart House, 2015: <http://chess.ca/newsfeed/node/737>

Kovalyov - Mareco, World Cup 2015: <http://chess.ca/newsfeed/node/675>

photos

Michael Kleinman (Europe)
Victoria Jung-Doknjas (Iceland)
John Upper (Canada)

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The **2017 Canadian Closed Chess Championship** (Zonal 2.2) took place June 27 - July 1, 2017 in Montreal.

At stake was both the National title, and a place in the World Cup.

As in 2012, it was organized by the FQE, and held in rooms inside Olympic Stadium.

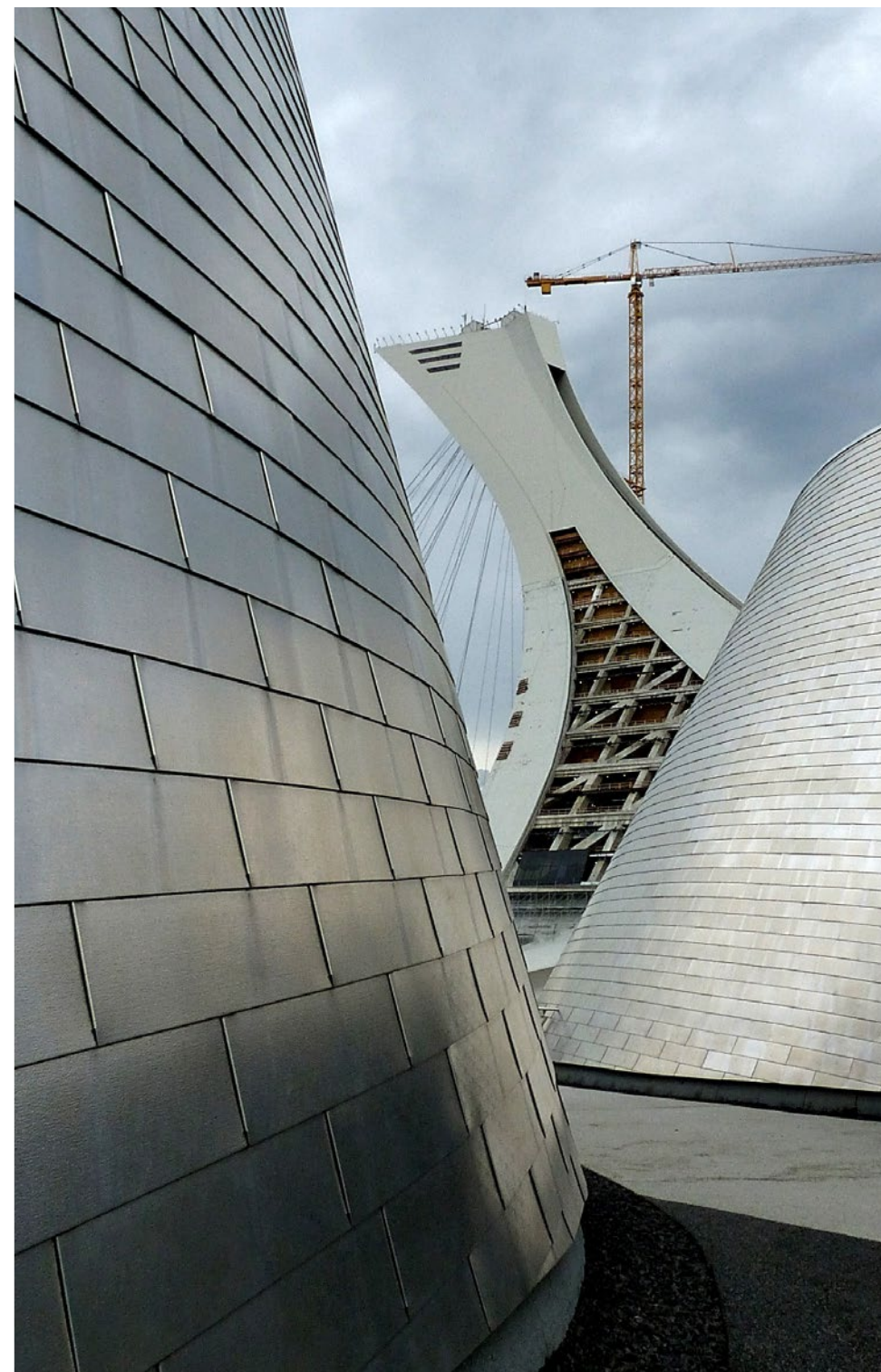
It was a nine-round Swiss which attracted 29 players, including GMs Bator Sambuev and Alexandre LeSiege, IMs Nikolay Noritsyn, Aman Hambleton, Thanh Nha Duong, and a handful of FMs.

Unfortunately, this Zonal will be remembered for the way it ended: Sambuev and Noritsyn tied for first with 8/9. They played four rapid games (15m + 10s) with White winning each time. They then played two blitz games (5m + 3s) with the first game being drawn and the second ending with a Sambuev win.

However, the final blitz game is controversial: Noritsyn attempted to promote to a Queen, but not finding one on the table, he placed an upside-down rook on the board and hit the clock. The TD stopped the clock and said that according to the rules the upside down rook is not an illegal move, but it is a rook and not a Queen. There was no time penalty, and the game continued. On the next move Sambuev promoted to a Queen with check, and won a few moves later. Nikolay appealed, but lost 3-1.

The 2017 Zonal was keenly contested, with decisive games between all of the GMs and IMs, and should be remembered for more than just its controversial and sad finish.

Chess Canada has a full pictorial report with seven annotated games, including its controversial finish.



LeSiege,Alexandre (2525) Noritsyn, Nikolay (2473) A05

Canadian Zonal Montreal (3),
28.06.2017

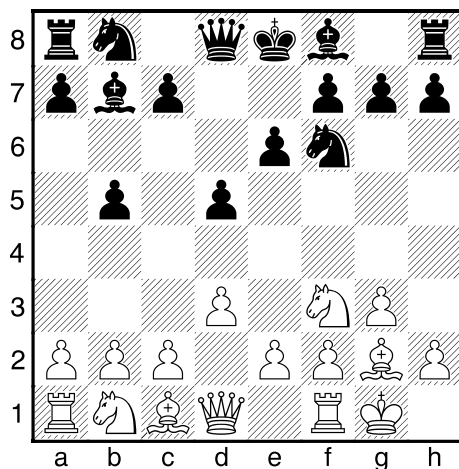
Notes: John Upper

This early meeting between two of the top seeds was critical to the final standings and fascinating.

1.♘f3 e6 2.g3 d5 3.♙g2 b5!?

This is only Black's 10th most frequently played move here, but it scores better than all the others (62%) and a huge Elo advantage! It stops White from going for Catalan or reversed-Benoni play with ...c4, and gains space on the queenside.

4.0-0 ♘f6 5.d3 ♙b7



6.♘bd2

6.c4 looks like the principled way to play: trying to turn the early ...b5 into queenside weaknesses.

6...a6 (6...dxc4 7.dxc4 ♖xd1 8.♖xd1 bxc4 9.♘e5 gives White a clear long-term advantage with play on the c-file.) 7.cxd5 ♘xd5 8.a4 ♙e7 9.♘c3 0-0 10.axb5 ♘xc3 11.bxc3 axb5

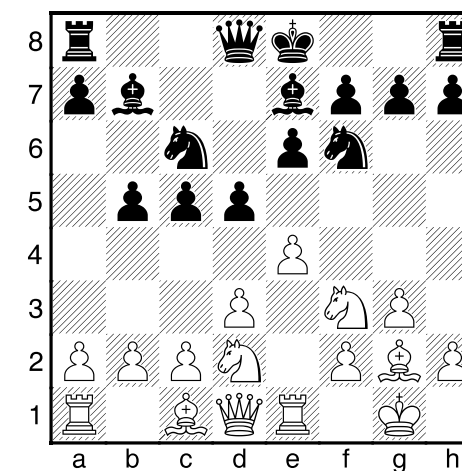
12.♖xa8 ♙xa8 13.♖b3 Black's best move would be ...b5-b6, but... something about something not moving backwards. 13...♙c6 14.♙e3 ♘d7 15.♖a1 ♖c8 16.♖a7 ♖b8 17.♖a2 b4 18.cxb4 ♙xb4 19.♘d4 (19.♖c2! ♘b6 (19...♙b7? 20.♘e5!+/-) 20.♖a1±) 19...♙xg2 20.♙xg2 ♙c5 21.♘c6 ♖b6 22.♘e7+ ♙h8 23.♙xc5 ♖xc5

24.♖a3 ♖b6 25.♖a5 ♖xa5 26.♖xa5± White has a better structure and more centralized ♙, but couldn't turn it into a win in [Short,N](#) (2670)–[Hou,Y](#) (2649) Hoogeveen (m) 2016, (½-½, 57).

6...♙e7 7.e4 c5 8.♖e1

The following game has a surprising pseudo-sac on move 10: 8.exd5 ♘xd5 9.♘e5 ♖c7 10.♘xf7!? I wasn't expecting that! 10...0-0! (10...♙xf7 11.♖f3+ ♙g8 12.c4± White gets the material back and the ♖h8 is hard to play.) 11.c4 ♖xf7 (11...♘b6 12.♙xb7 ♖xb7 13.♘e5±) 12.cxd5 exd5 13.♘f3 ♘c6 14.♙g5 ♖af8 15.♙xe7 ♖xe7 16.♖c1 ½-½ [Nisipeanu,L](#) (2671)–[Moroni,L](#) (2530) Zuerich, 2017.

8...♘c6



IM Nikolay Noritsyn Rd.3 vs GM Alex LeSiege

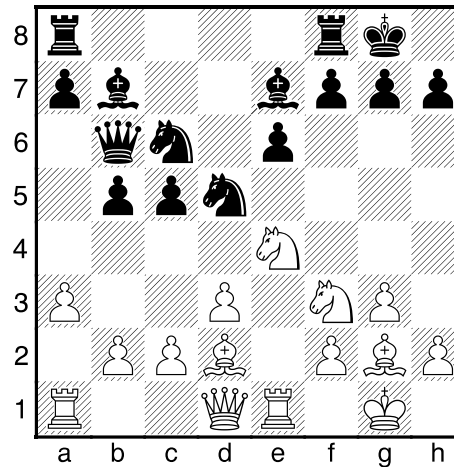
9.exd5

9.e5 ♘d7 transposes into typical King's Indian Attack, but where Black may be a little better off than usual since he's already gained more queenside space with ...b5 (rather than ...b6), and has not yet castled, which allows plans with ...g5!?

9...♘xd5

9...exd5 10.d4!± leaves Black's queenside minors misplaced, though that might be only a temporary inconvenience; e.g. 10...c4 11.♘f1 0-0 12.♙g5 h6 13.♙xf6 ♙xf6 14.c3 ♖d6 15.♘e3 ♖ab8 16.♖d2 ♖d7 17.h4 h5 18.♙h2 g6 19.♙h3 ♖d6 Despite conceding several tempi with his ♖, Black is still OK. 20.♘g2 ♙c8 21.♖f4 ♖xf4 22.♘xf4 ♙xh3 23.♙xh3 ♖fd8 24.♖ad1 a5? (24...b4∞) 25.♘xg6! fxg6 26.♖e6 ♘xd4 27.♘xd4 ♙f7 28.♖a6 b4?? 29.♘c6 bxc3 30.bxc3 1-0 [Danielsen,H \(2498\)–Rusev,K \(2525\) Odense, 2012.](#)

10.a3 0-0 11.♘e4 ♖b6
12.♙d2
 12.♙g5!?

**12...c4!?**

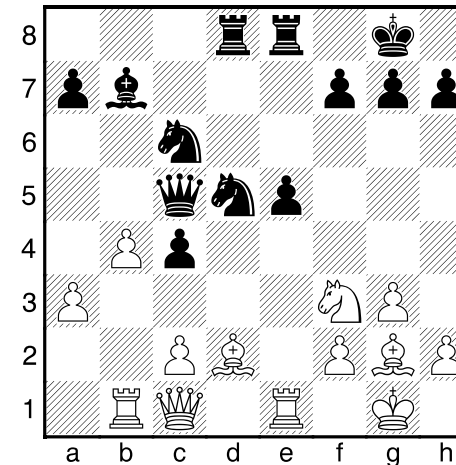
Not a move the computers like (...♖ad8, ...a5), but a combative move, ensuring an unbalanced pawn structure.

13.dxc4 bxc4 14.♖b1 ♖ad8 15.♖c1

15.♖e2 ♙a6 16.♘c3= or 16.♙f1!?

15...e5 16.♘c3 ♙c5 17.♘e4**♖fe8!?**

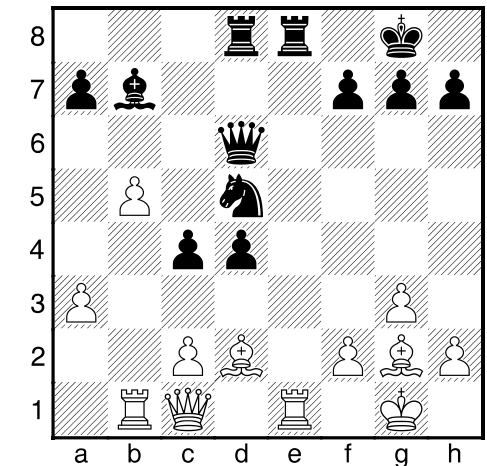
Conceding the ♙ pair. I think 17...♙e7 threatening ...f5 would have been most player's automatic choice.

18.♘xc5 ♖xc5 19.b4**19...♖d6?!**

19...cxb3?! 20.cxb3 and the ♙-pair and queenside majority ought to be better for White in

the long run.

♙19...♖b5 stops White's next, although it's hard to believe Black's position might be worse after the ensuing trade on d4.

20.b5! ♘d4 21.♘xd4 exd4

22.♙a5! ♖c8 23.♖d2?!
 ♙23.a4 simply saving the a-pawn.

Richard Bérubé Like many other Quebec sporting organizations, the FQE has its home office in the Big O.

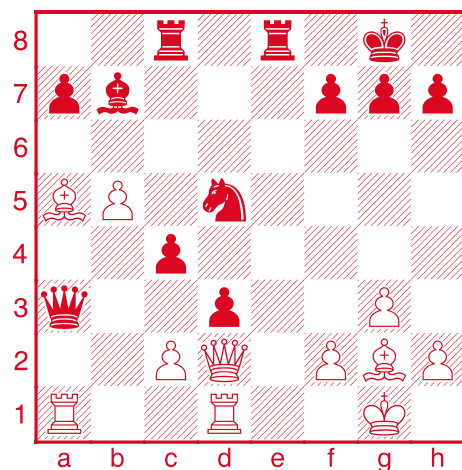




23...♖xa3 24.♞ed1

24.♞xe8+ ♜xe8 25.♞e1 ♜c8 26.b6!? is a computer-line that might occur to Kramnik, 26...c3?! shows the point of the sac: 27.♞xd4 ♞xa5 28.bxa7 White has only one pawn for the piece, but ♜b1 is difficult for Black; for example: 28...♜a8 29.♜b1 taking the a7-pawn loses a piece due to back-rank tactics, but after 29...♞c7 30.♜b5± Black has to give back the ♞ to eliminate the a7-pawn.

24...d3 25.♞a1



25...♞b2?

Making the ♞ safe and forking c2 and b5 is obviously a candidate move, but it's not the best.

25...♞c5 hitting f2 and so

threatening ...♞e2. 26.cxd3 c3□ 27.♞c2 ♞xb5±, or 27...h5!? to soften up White's kingside when there can be tactics with ...♞e3.

26.cxd3?

26.♞xd5□± and Black has a choice:

26...♞xd5? 27.♞c3□ ♞xb5 28.♜a5 ♞c6 29.♞g5 threatening mate on g7 and the ♞d5.

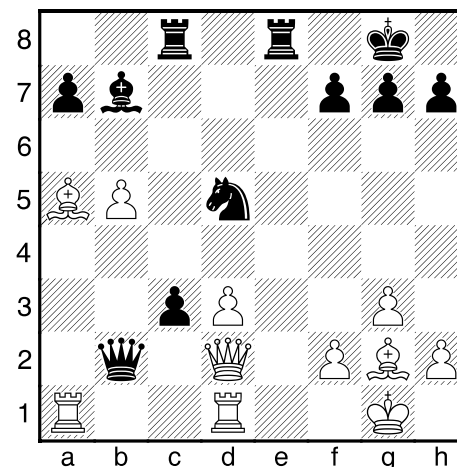
26...♞e2! leads to a forcing line where White's scattered pieces can somehow look out for each other and stop Black's passers:

27.♞g5 leads to a whole course in tactics: 27...♞d4! forking f2 and d5. 28.♞xf7+ Desperado. 28...♞xf7 29.♞h5+□ Fork. 29...♞g8 30.♞xe2 using the pin to the undefended ♞d4, 30...♞d5□ in-between move, defending the ♞ with a mate threat 31.f3□ dxe2 32.♜xd5 ♞xd5 33.♞f2± White is nominally better in the ♜ and opposite ♞ ending.

27.♞xb7 27...♜xd2 28.♞xd2 looks nightmarish for White, but there's no way to make those

passers go: 28...dxc2 (28...♜b8 29.♞c6 ♞xc2 30.♞e3 c3 31.♞e4! ♜d8 32.b6!+-) 29.♞xc8 cxd1♞+ 30.♜xd1 ♞xb5± (30...♞c2 31.♞g4+-).

26...c3□



27.♞xb2

27.♞xc3 ♞xc3 28.♞xc3 ♞xc3 29.♞xb7 ♞xd1 This would be excellent for White, but the obvious 30.♞xc8 loses an exchange to 30...♞e1+ 31.♞g2 ♞e3+-.

27...cxb2 28.♜ab1 ♜c2

It's over: Black has a protected passed pawn on the 2nd and his ♜s have the only open files.

29.♞f1 ♜ec8-+ 30.♞h3 ♜8c5 31.♜e1 g6 32.♞d7 ♞c3

33.♞xc3 ♜5xc3 34.♞c6 ♜c1!
Bonus exclam for style.

0-1

**Sambuev, Bator (2513)
Noritsyn, Nikolay (2473)**

C09

*Canadian Zonal Montreal (4.1),
28.06.2017*

Notes: John Upper

1.d4 e6!?

An interesting choice, given that Bator has years of experience playing the French.

**2.e4 d5 3.♞d2 c5 4.♞gf3
♞c6 5.exd5 exd5 6.♞b5
♞e7+!?**

"This check is equivalent to a tacit draw offer by 7.♞e2 ♞xe2+ etc." – [Keres](#), *Paul Keres: The Road to the Top*.

6...♞d6 7.dxc5 ♞xc5 is the way Kortchnoi played this as Black, winning a few and almost never losing, even against Karpov.

7.♞e2

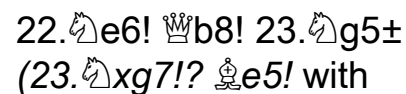


7...cxd4 8.0-0 ♔c7 9.♘b3 ♚d6?!

(♙9...♘f6

A photograph showing three men engaged in a chess match at a table. The man on the left, with dark curly hair and wearing a plaid shirt, is looking intently at the board. The man in the middle, wearing a teal shirt and glasses, has his head resting on his hand, appearing to be in deep thought or fatigue. The man on the right, wearing a black long-sleeved shirt, is leaning forward, also focused on the game. The chessboard is set up with white and black pieces. A sign on the table identifies the event as the 'Canadian Chess Championship' and 'Championnat d'échecs du Canada', with the name 'Alexandre Le Siège' and the year '2011' visible. A black bag is placed on the table behind the chessboard.

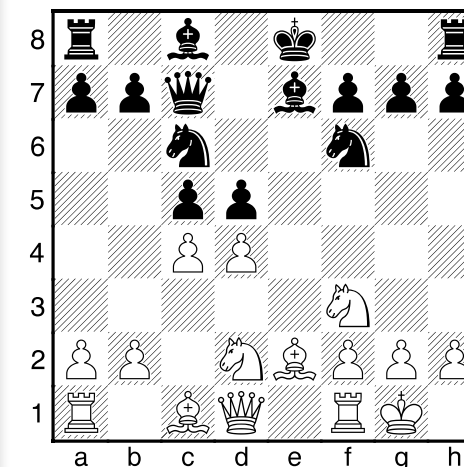
Analysis Diagram:



To show just how much chess has changed in the 60+ years,

8.0-0  f6 9.c4!?

9...♙e7



The center is at maximum tension and the main question is whether exchanges bring the opponent's minors to more active or tactically vulnerable squares.

10.dxc5

10.cxd5 ♘xd5 11.dxc5 ♕f5!? angling for ...000!?

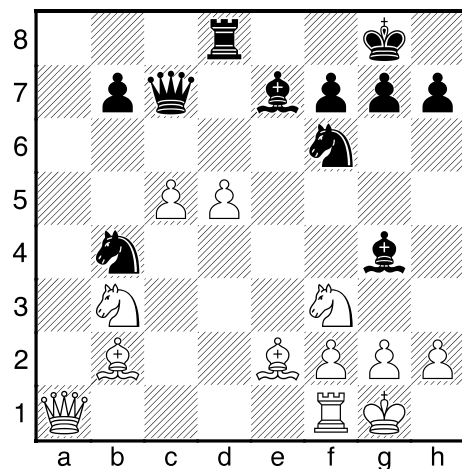
10...0-0

10...dxc4 11.♘xc4 ♕xc5 12.♕e3 ♕xe3 13.♘d6+∞.

11.a3

11.cxd5 ♘xd5 12.♘e4 ♘f4 13.♕xf4 ♖xf4 14.♘d6 (14.♖a4!?±) 14...♖d8= (14...♕e6!?).

11...♖d8 12.b4 a5 13.♕b2 axb4 14.axb4 ♖xa1 15.♖xa1 ♘xb4= 16.♘b3 ♕g4 17.cxd5



17...♖xd5?

This is hard to understand, especially since the more natural move 17...♘bd5!= is perfectly OK. Possibly Black thought he was already better, and activating the ♖ was the way to prove it, or maybe he just missed the strength of White's next.

18.♖a4!

Attacking the two minors along the 4th rank. This is a theme of a lot of the variations which follow.

18...♖f4□

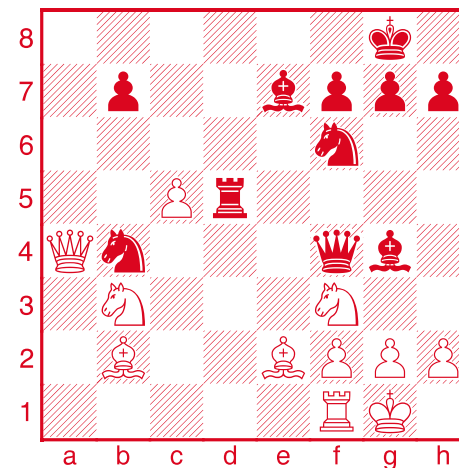
Best.

18...♘c6? 19.♕xf6 ♕xf6 (19...♕xf3 20.♕xf3 ♕xf6 21.♕xd5+-) 20.♖xg4+- wins the ♕;
18...♕xc5 19.♘xc5 ♖xc5 20.♕a3 ♕xf3 21.♕xf3 ♖d4 22.♖b1+- also wins a piece;
18...♖h5 is the trickiest line 19.h3□ ♕xf3 (19...♕xh3 20.♕xf6 simplest. 20...♕g4 21.♕xe7 ♕xf3? 22.♖e8#) 20.♕xf3 ♖h4 21.♖a8+ ♕f8 (21...♖d8 22.♖xb7 the c-pawn is a monster.) 22.♕xf6 gxf6 23.♖e1 ♖g7 24.♖e8

Pix-Mortem Vadim Tsypin snaps 3 Champs: Noritsyn, LeSiege, Sambuev.

Note piece in hand, there will be a quiz.

♕xc5 25.♘xc5 ♖xc5 26.♖g8+ ♔h6 27.♖g3! and there's no good defence to ♖g8.



19.♖a8+?

19.♖e1□ This quiet move is the

only one that gives White big advantage, but it is *really* hard to choose when there are so many possible tactics:

19...♕xc5 20.♘xc5 ♖xc5 the ♕ and ♖ guard c8, so ♖a8+ isn't mate. 21.♖d1! With an obvious threat, but hard to see when considering ♖f1-e1. 21...♖c8 22.♖d4+- with a fork on the 4th.

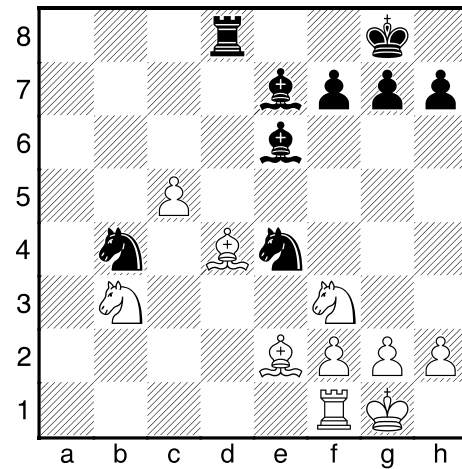
19...♘d3! 20.♖xf4 ♘xf4 21.♕c4! double-attack on d5 and e7. 21...♕xf3 (21...♖d7 22.♕b5 ♖c7 23.♕e5+-) 22.♕xd5! ♕xd5 23.♖xe7 ♕xb3 24.♖xb7



threatening mate and the ♔.

24...♔a4 25.♖b4+- again, winning the loose piece on the 4th rank.

19...♖d8 20.♔xb7 ♔e4!
21.♔xe4 ♖xe4 22.♔d4 ♔e6



23.♖b1

23.♖a5=.

23...♖c6 24.♔b5

24.♔e3?? ♖c3-+.

24...♖xd4 25.♖bxd4

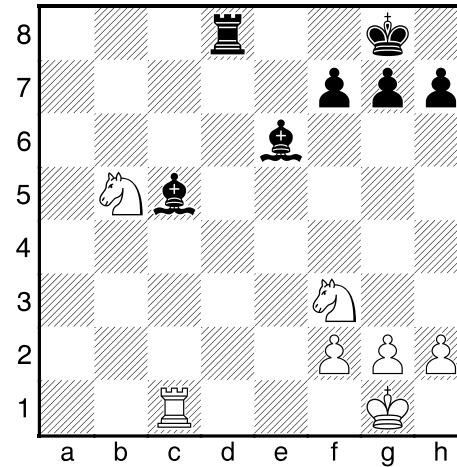
25.♖fxd4?? ♖c3-+.

25...♖c3 26.♖c1

♔26.♖b2! ♔xc5 27.♖xe6 ♖d1+

28.♔f1 fxe6 29.g3=.

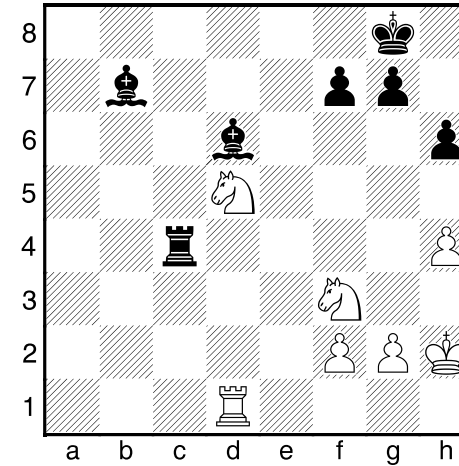
26...♖xb5 27.♖xb5 ♔xc5



Two ♔s vs two ♖s, but all the pawns are on the same side, so White should be able to hold... after surviving some torture.

28.♖g5 ♔c8 29.h4 ♔f8

30.♖c3 h6 31.♖f3 ♔b7
32.♖d1 ♖c8 33.♖d5 ♖c4
34.♔h2 ♔d6+



35.♔g1??

35.♔h1 ♖xd5 (35...♔c5!

36.♔g1 ♖g4!?) 36.♖xd5 ♖c1+

37.♖g1= is the point of keeping g1 free.

35...♔xd5

There's a back-rank mate, so White loses a whole ♖.

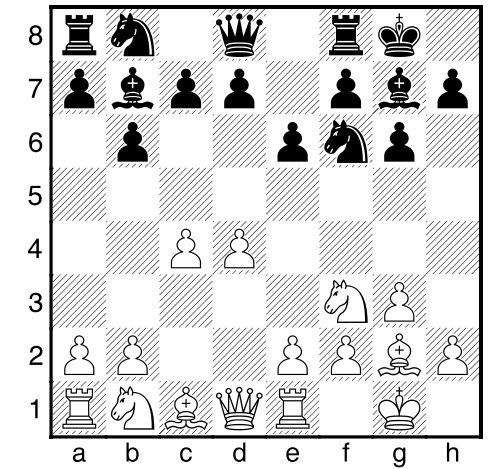
0-1

Oussedik, Elias (2163)
Hambleton, Aman (2471)
E16

Canadian Zonal Montreal (4),
28.06.2017

Notes: John Upper

1.d4 e6 2.c4 ♖f6 3.♖f3 b6
4.g3 ♔b7 5.♔g2 g6 6.0-0
♔g7 7.♖e1 0-0

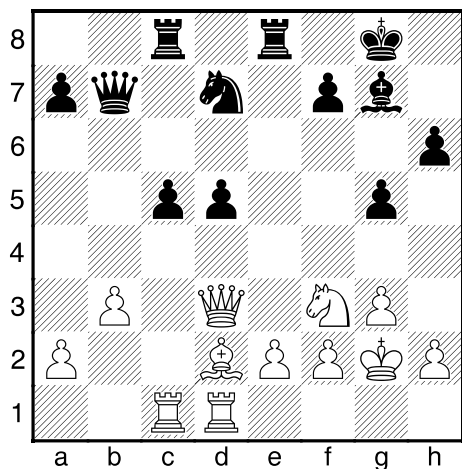


8.♖e5

A Novelty. 8.♔f4!?



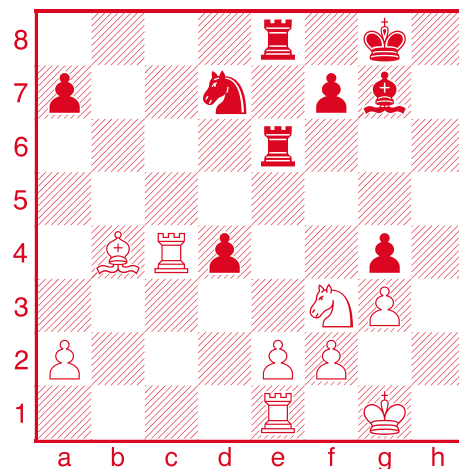
8...♙xg2 9.♔xg2 d5 10.♚c2
c5 11.dxc5 bxc5 12.♘d2
♙b6 13.♘df3 ♘fd7 14.♘xd7
♘xd7 15.cxd5 exd5 16.♖d1
♙b7 17.♙f4 ♖fe8 18.♖ac1
♖ac8 19.b3 h6 20.♚d3?! g5
21.♙d2



21...d4

21...♖e4! supports ...c4, blocks the ♔, and sets up long diagonal tactics with ...g4 and ...d4; e.g. 22.♙c3? d4 23.♙a1 g4-+.

22.♔g1 ♖c6 23.h3 ♖ce6
24.♖e1 ♙d5 25.b4 cxb4
26.♙xb4 h5 27.♚c4 ♙xc4
28.♖xc4 g4 29.hxg4 hxg4



White has played cautiously but carefully enough to reach an endgame with material equality

but where his pieces are a little uncoordinated.

Question: Can White now play ♘xd4?

30.♘xd4!

Answer: Can and *should*, but the tactics are very tricky.

30.♘h2? ♖xe2 31.♖xe2 ♖xe2
32.♘xg4 d3♣.

30...♖e4!

Pinning the ♘d4 to the ♖ is the

only move to pose any difficulties for White.

31.e3

Defending the ♘, but weakening f3.

31.♖d1? ♘b6!-+ 32.f3!? the trickiest 32...gxf3 33.exf3 ♘xc4 34.fxe4 ♖d8. Incredibly, White can't escape the d-file pin for less than an exchange! 35.♙c5 (35.♙c3 ♘a3! and ♘ goes to c2 or b5.) 35...♖d7 defending

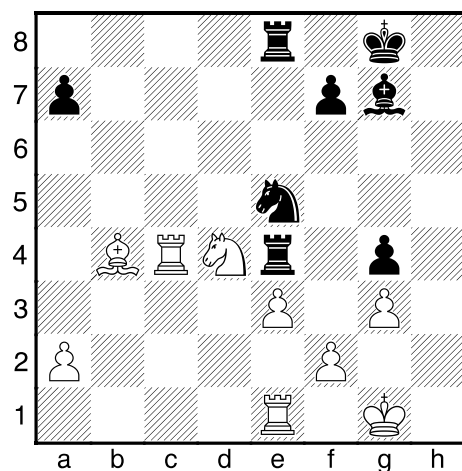


Brah v Brah

Elias Oussedik v Aman Hambleton

a7 and threatening ...♘b2-a4 to remove the ♙ guarding the ♘d4. (35...♘b6 also works by threatening ...♘a4 and ...♞d7.) 36.♙f2 (36.♞c1 ♙xd4+ with check! 37.♙xd4 ♞xd4 and the ♞ defends the ♘.) 36...♘b2 37.♞d2 ♘a4 38.♙xa7 ♞xa7+.

31...♘e5



Hitting the ♞ and setting up forks on f3 and d3.

32.♞cc1??

32.♞c7? ♘d3! 33.♞b1 ♙xd4! 34.exd4 ♞b8 35.a3 a5 36.♞d1 axb4 37.♞xd3 ♞e1+! controlling the promotion rank with tempo 38.♙g2 b3+;

32.♞c3? ♘f3+! 33.♘xf3 ♞xb4 and White is hanging on c3 and

f3, and 34.♘d4 fails to either capture on d4, exploiting the pin on the e-file;

32.♞c2 ♞xd4 (32...♘d3 33.♞b1 ♞b8 34.a3 ♙xd4 (34...a5? 35.♘c6±) 35.exd4 a5 36.♞d1 ♞=) 33.exd4 ♘f3+ 34.♙f1 ♘xe1 35.♙xe1 ♙xd4=.

32...♘d3 33.♙c3 ♘xe1 34.♙xe1

34.♞xe1 ♙xd4 35.♙xd4 ♞xd4+ is the same winning tactic as the game.

34...♙xd4

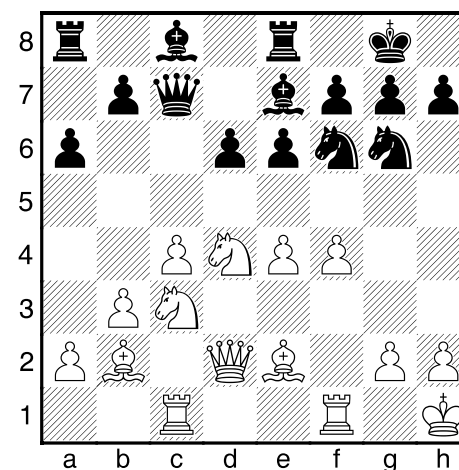
0-1

Michael Kleinman did not have a good event and, like Alex LeSiege, he withdrew midway through. Here he gets out-knuckled by FM Tanraj Sohal.

Kleinman, Michael (2366)
Sohal, Tanraj (2319)
B40

Canadian Zonal Montreal (4), 28.06.2017
Notes: John Upper

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.b3 ♘c6 4.♙b2 a6 5.c4 d6 6.d4 cxd4 7.♘xd4 ♞c7 8.♙e2 ♘f6 9.♘c3 ♙e7 10.♞c1 0-0 11.0-0 ♘e5 12.f4 ♘g6 13.♙h1 ♞e8 14.♞d2



By an unusual move-order (3.b3) the players have reached a Hedgehog middlegame with the ♘g6 unusually placed: inviting f4-f5 but also supporting ...e5. The notes to the next five moves are dense, but they do reflect the tactical and strategic complexity of these middlegames.

14...e5 15.fxe5?!

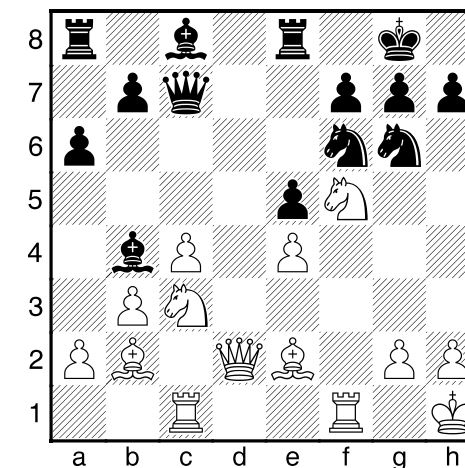
15.♘f5! ♙xf5 (15...♘xf4? 16.♞xf4!! exf4 17.♘d5 (17.♘xg7?) 17...♘xd5 18.cxd5 ♞d7 19.♘xg7+-.) 16.exf5 ♘xf4 17.♙f3

g2-g3 threatens to trap the ♘, so Black has to break. 17...d5! 18.cxd5 (18.g3? e4!∞ 19.♞cd1) 18...♞a5 19.♞fd1 unpinning the ♘c3 and threatening both g3 and d6. (19.g3 ♘4xd5 20.♙xd5 ♞ad8∞).

15...dxe5 16.♘f5 ♙b4?!

Pinning the ♘ and threatening ...♘xe4.

16...♙xf5 Giving up the ♙s to chop the dangerous ♘f5. 17.♘d5!! ♘xd5 (17...♞d8 18.♞xf5±) 18.cxd5 ♞d7 19.♞xf5 with the ♙s, passed pawn, and better structure.



17.♞e3?!

White has several decent moves here; surprisingly, two of them are sacrifices.

17. ♖d5 is a move both sides have to calculate every turn.
 17... ♙xd2 (17... ♘xd5 18. cxd5 ♖a5 19. ♙c3=) 18. ♖xc7 ♙xc1
 19. ♙xc1 ♘xe4! (19... ♙e6 20. ♖d6±) 20. ♖h6+! (20. ♖xg7 ♖d8 21. ♖xa8 ♙xg7 22. ♖c7=; 20. ♖xa8 ♙xf5 21. ♖xf5 ♖xa8+ 20... gxf6 21. ♖xe8±.

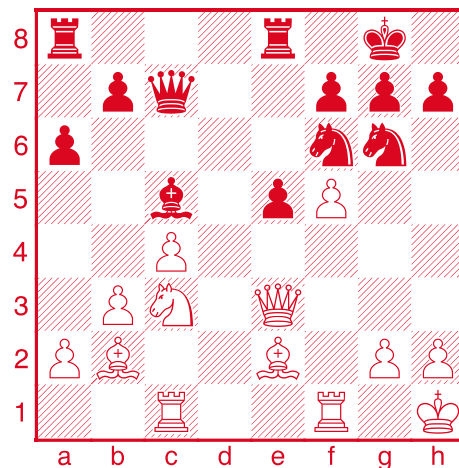
A ♘ on f5 is always a threat to sacrifice; here are two ways to try it:

17. ♖h6+!? ♙h8! (17... gxf6? 18. ♖xf6±; 17... ♙f8? 18. ♖g5±) 18. ♖e3 ♙xc3 (18... ♙c5 19. ♖f3±) 19. ♙xc3 ♙e6 20. ♖xf6!?

SF10 initially rates **17. ♖xg7!?** as winning, but changes its eval after 23 ply: 17... ♙xg7 (17... ♘xe4?? 18. ♖xe8+-) 18. ♖xf6 ♙xc3 (18... ♙xf6 19. ♖d5+-) 19. ♙xc3 ♙xf6 20. ♖h6 ♙b6!± stopping ♙b4. White is down a ♖ for a pawn, but Stockfish rates this as only a little bit better for Black. (20... ♙e7?? 21. ♙b4+-).

17... ♙xf5 18. exf5
 18. ♖xf5!? is reasonable too.

18... ♙c5?
 18... ♖f4!±.



19. ♖g3?



Kleinman

19. ♖d5!! is very strong here, but after the forced sequence 19... ♘xd5 (19... ♖c6? 20. ♖xf6+ gxf6 21. ♖g3+- White will be up a piece.) 20. cxd5 the alternatives become difficult to calculate:

a) 20... b6? 21. fxf6;

b) 20... ♖ac8 21. ♖xc5 (21. ♖g3! is even better.) 21... ♖xc5 22. ♖xc5 ♖xc5 23. fxf6+- and Black can't execute the fork on c2 because of the one on f7;

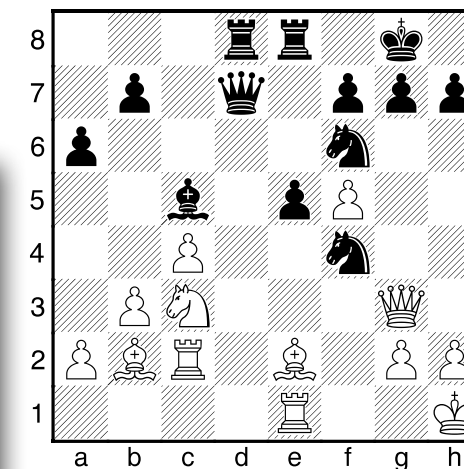
c) 20... ♙xe3 21. ♖xc7 ♖f4

22. ♙c4! (22. ♙f3 e4+; 22. ♖f3 ♖xe2 23. ♖xe3 ♖f4=) 22... b5! 23. g3 ♖h5 (23... bxc4? 24. gxf4 and no matter what Black plays, White's pawns are much more dangerous.) 24. ♙e2±.

19... ♖f4 20. ♖fe1?
 ♖20. ♙f3.

20... ♖ad8!± 21. ♖c2?
 21. ♙f1±.

21... ♖d7!



Hitting f5 and dominating the only open file.

22. ♖d5 ♖e4!-+
 Black's ♖'s jump all over White. 22... ♖xf5! also wins: 23. ♖xf6+ ♖xf6-+.

Sohal

23.♔f3 ♖f2+ 24.♔g1 ♖2d3+
25.♔f1 ♖xe1 26.♔xe1 ♔xf5
Black won in 56 moves.

0-1

Oussedik, Elias (2163)

Itkin, David (2181)

A65

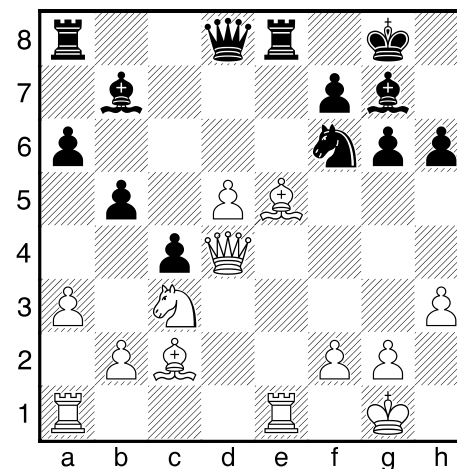
Canadian Zonal Montreal (9),
01.07.2017

Notes: John Upper

1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 ♘g7
4.e4 d6 5.h3 0-0 6.♙g5 c5
7.d5 e6 8.♘f3 exd5 9.cxd5
♖e8 10.♙d3 c4 11.♙c2
b5 12.a3 ♖bd7 13.0-0 h6
14.♙e3 ♖e5 15.♘xe5 ♖xe5
16.♖e1
16.f4±.

16...♖e8 17.♙d4 a6 18.e5
18.f4!

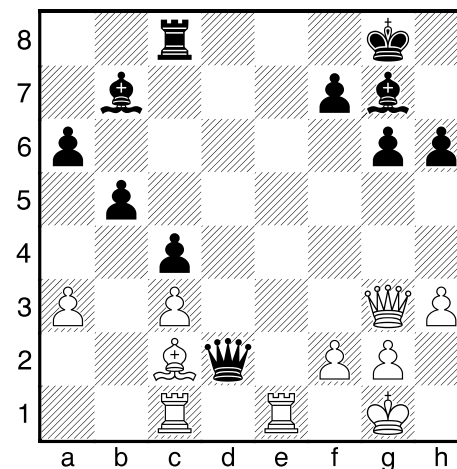
18...dxe5= 19.♙xe5 ♙b7
20.♙d4



20...♖xe5!!∞

Nice! Even without the center pawns, Benoni dark-square play is worth a lot.

21.♔xe5 ♖xd5 22.♔g3 ♖xc3
23.bxc3 ♔d2 24.♖ac1 ♖c8!



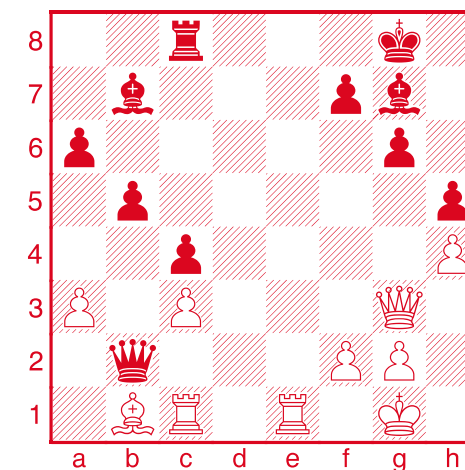
Preventing ♔c7. Not just a good move, but good judgment: Black played a positional exchange

sac, and his comp won't go away if he plays slowly.

25.♙b1∞

Since ♙xg6 is a key tactic, it makes sense to look for ways to economize on ♙ moves; e.g. 25.h4!? ♔xc3 26.♔xc3 ♙xc3 27.♙f5! gxf5! (27...♙xe1 28.♙xc8 ♙xf2+ 29.♔xf2 ♙xc8 30.♖d1∞) 28.♖xc3 ♙d5̄ feels like a two-result game, but harder to win than draw without the ♙ pair.

25...♔b2 26.h4 h5



A reluctant Benoni has turned into a positionally and materially unbalanced mess: Black is collecting on the queenside, but White has serious threats on the kingside.



David Itkin Lost to the top three, but was 5½/6 against the rest, 5th overall.



27. ♖g5

Defending the ♖c1 and preparing ♖e7.

27. ♗xg6!?

fxg6

28. ♖xg6 ♖f8

threatening f2. 29. ♖c2 ♖

xa3 ♖∞

preventing

♖e7, with an

exciting mess.

For instance,

White's most

obvious

try 30. ♖ce2? actually loses

to 30... ♖c5! attacking f2 and

going to f5 to save the ♔.

31. ♖e7 ♖xf2+ ♖ 32. ♔h2 ♖xh4+

33. ♔g1 ♖f2+ 34. ♔h2 ♖xg2+!-+

forcing off the ♖s for a winning

endgame. (34... ♖h4+ draws, or

gains time on the increment, but

not more.)

27... ♖xa3?

27... ♖f8! indirectly guards

against ♗xg6 since ...fxg6 will

create a double attack on f2.

28. ♖e7??



28. ♗xg6! fxg6 29. ♖e7+- ♗a8

(29... ♖d6 30. ♖xb7+-; 29... ♗c6

30. ♖ce1 ♖xc3 31. ♖xg6+-;

29... ♗h6 doesn't work here

because with the f7 pawn gone

30. ♖xg6+ is possible and

winning.) 30. ♖ce1+- or 30. ♖d1+-.

The game move wins against

every defence... except one:

28... ♗h6 ♖-+

Not just the only move to win, but

the only move that doesn't lose.

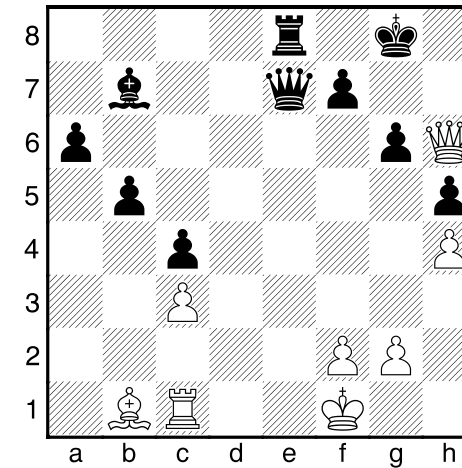
The ♖ can't protect both ♖s.

29. ♖xh6

29. ♖g3?? is much worse

29... ♖xc1+ 30. ♔h2 ♗f4-+.

29... ♖xe7 30. ♔f1 ♖e8



Threatening ... ♖xh4 winning a pawn with mate on h1.

31. ♔g1

31. ♗xg6 fxg6 32. ♖xg6+ ♔f8

33. ♖h6+ ♖g7-+.

31... ♖e6

The price to sac on g6 just went

up. Not 31... ♖xh4?? 32. ♗xg6=.

32. ♖f4 ♖e5 33. ♖h6 ♖d5

34. f3 ♖e2 35. ♔f1 ♖d2

36. ♖xd2 ♖xd2 37. ♗c2 ♔f8

38. ♔e1 ♖xg2

0-1

Hambleton, Aman (2471)

Sambuev, Bator (2513)

A47

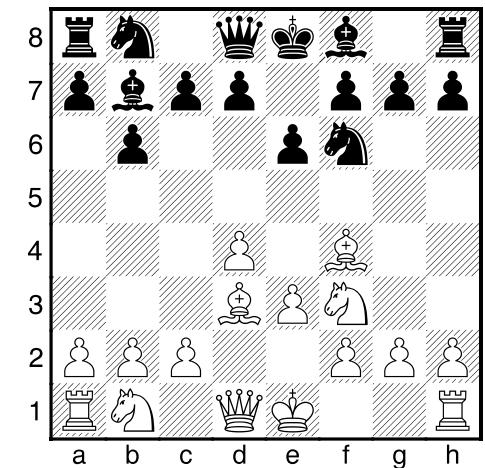
Canadian Zonal Montreal (9),

01.07.2017

Notes: John Upper

1. d4 ♘f6 2. ♘f3 e6 3. ♗f4 b6

4. e3 ♗b7 5. ♗d3



Aman has been playing the London System a lot online, and may also have chosen this super-solid setup as a way to provoke Black, who had to win this game to tie for first.

5... d6

A good move: blocking the ♗f4

and fighting for e5. Both ... ♗e7

and ... c5 are more common.

6.0-0 h6N

Preparing to chase the ♖f4 without allowing ♖g5.

7.♘bd2

7.h3 g5 8.♙h2 g4!? If this works, I could write that Black has shown the folly of h2-h3. And if it doesn't work, I could write about the folly of attacking when behind in development... in either case, quoting Chernev's *Logical Chess: Move by Move*.

7...♘h5 8.♙e4!?
More provocation!?

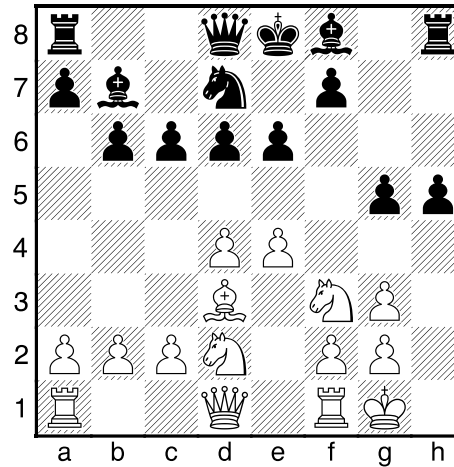
8...c6

8...d5 9.♙d3 would put Black up a tempo in a more usual London System formation, but with much more work to do to stir up imbalances and winning chances.

9.♙d3 g5 10.♙g3 ♘d7 11.e4 ♘xg3 12.hxg3 h5!?

GM Bator Sambuev

Lost here, but won all his other games to finish =1st.



Black provokes back? This is actually Stockfish's top choice.

Being provocative is a bonus.

13.d5??

... and it works! ♞13.♖e1.

(Did White just overlook Black's 16th move? Or was he provoked into overlooking it?)

13...cxd5 14.exd5 ♙xd5**15.♙e4 ♙xe4**

15...♘f6? 16.♙xd5 ♘xd5 17.♘e4 g4 18.c4±.

16.♘xe4

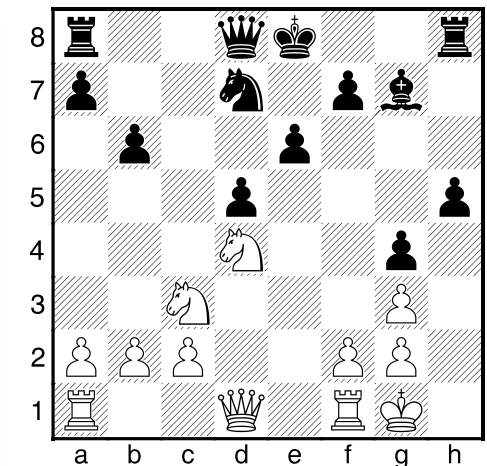
With a double attack on d6 and g5...

16...g4□

... which White has no time to execute.

17.♘d4

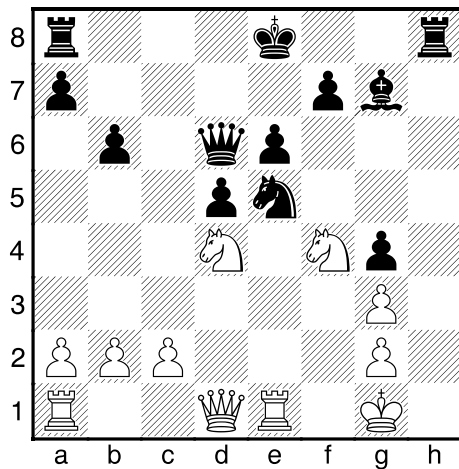
17.♘xd6+? ♙xd6 18.♙xd6 gxf3-+ is obviously hopeless.

17...d5 18.♘c3 ♙g7

White has more development, but Black has an extra pawn and more control in the center and a safe ♔. Black's central pawns resemble a French, which both Bator and Aman played for years as their main defence to 1.e4.

19.♖e1 ♘e5 20.♘ce2 h4

21. ♖f4 hxc3 22. fxc3 ♔d6



23. c3

23.c4 is White's only pawn break, and it gives Black chances to blunder, but not if he's careful: 23...dxc4??

(23...♖xc4? 24. ♖fxe6 ♕e5□; 23...♔c5!-+; 23...0-0-0-+)

24. ♖dxe6+- ♔xd1 25. ♖xg7+ ♔f8 26. ♖axd1 ♔xg7 27. ♖xe5+-.

23...♖c8

23...0-0-0 is good, while 23...0-0 is not so good, because it allows 24. ♖h5∞ the ♖ on the rim to grin.

24. ♔e2 ♖c4 25. ♖ad1 ♔c5?

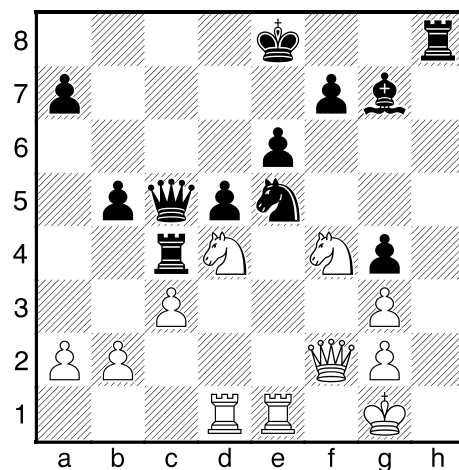
25...0-0? 26. ♖h5∞.

△25...♔f8! a safety-first move the computers rate as best, though it does seem to leave the

♖h8 condemned to very long-term defensive duties.

26. ♔f2 b5?

△26...♔d6 keeps an eye on all the sensitive center squares.



...b5-b4 is the right plan — a minority attack to pry open the c-file and undermine the ♖d4 — but the wrong time.

With Black's ♔ in the center and two half-open files there are dangerous tactics, and now the ♔ and ♔ and b5-pawn will be targets.

If White had an e5-pawn, and Black's ♖ was on c6 then the Black ♔ would be safer than it is in the game, and the minority attack *would* be a good continuation.



27.a3?

White misses his chance.

27.♖e3!! breaks the pin to the ♔ on f2 and so threatens to take twice on e6. 27...♖h6! defends e6. (27...b4?? 28.♘dxe6 fxe6 29.♘xe6 ♕e7 30.♘xg7+ ♕xg7 31.♖xd5+; 27...♔e7 28.♕e2! and White has winning tactics on the d- and e-files.) 28.♕e2 doubling up on the ♘e5, and now:

28...♕c7 gives the b-pawn instead of the d-pawn.

29.♘xb5∞;

28...♘g6 29.♘fxe6+;

28...♕d6 29.♘xb5 ♕b8 30.b3∞;

28...♘c6 29.♘b3! and takes on d5. (29.♘f5!?∞ ♖e4 30.♘d6+!∞)

27...♖h6!

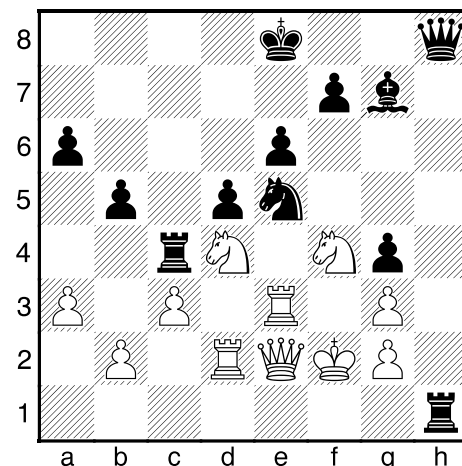
27...0-0? 28.♘h5! ♘g6 29.♘xg7 ♔xg7 30.♖xe6!±.

28.♖e3 a6

Black's last two moves have nullified the tactics in the previous note.

29.♖d2 ♕f8!

Heading for the only open file.

30.♕e2 ♕h8 31.♔f2 ♖h1**32.♘dxe6**

White goes for broke.

32.♖d1 is the computer suggestion, accepting that there will be no killer central breakthrough, and hoping to survive a worse position a pawn down: 32...♖xd1 33.♕xd1 ♘h6 (33...♔d7!) 34.♕e2 ♘xf4 35.gxf4 ♕h4+ 36.g3 (36.♔g1? g3□-+) 36...♕h2+ 37.♔f1 ♕xe2+ 38.♔xe2 ♘c6± or 38...♘d7±.

32...fxe6 33.♘xe6 ♔f7!

Steps away so there is no ♖ takes with check.

33...♔d7 also wins: 34.♘xg7 ♕f8+!-+.

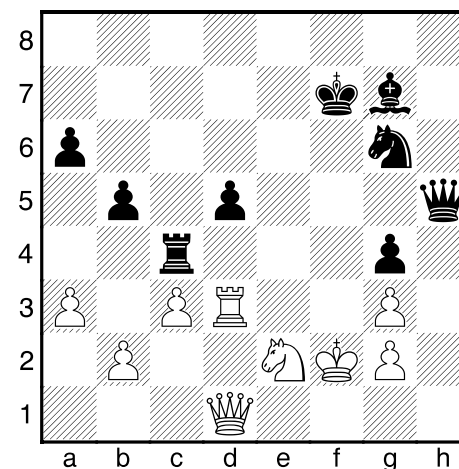
34.♘d4

34.♘g5+ ♔g6-+ threatens the ♘ and ...♕f8+.

34.♘xg7 does not win material, since 34...♕xg7 35.♖xe5 ♕f6+□-+ wins the ♖ and forces mate sooner rather than later.

34...♕h2

♔34...♕h6! threatens ...♕f6+ when White has to throw away some pieces to clear an escape for the ♔.

35.♖d1 ♖xd1□ 36.♕xd1 ♕h5**37.♘e2 ♘g6 38.♖d3****38...d4!? 39.cxd4 ♘f8****40.♘c3 ♖c6 41.♖e3 ♖f6+****42.♔g1 ♔g7 43.♖e4 ♘d6****44.♕xg4 ♕xg4 45.♖xg4 ♖f5****46.♘e4 ♘b8 47.♘d2 ♔f6****48.♘f3 ♖h5 49.a4**

49.♘h4 ♖g5-+.

49...♔f5 50.♘h2 ♖xh2!**51.♖xg6 ♔xg6**

0-1

Playoff

After White won all four games in the rapid part of the play-off, the title was determined by a blitz game. I have given detailed notes because the game — around move 11-13 but especially the endgame from moves 37-50 — is fascinating, and could make excellent challenging analysis material.

Sambuev, Bator (2513) Noritsyn, Nikolay (2473)

D36

CAN Zonal playoff blitz Montreal (2), 01.07.2017

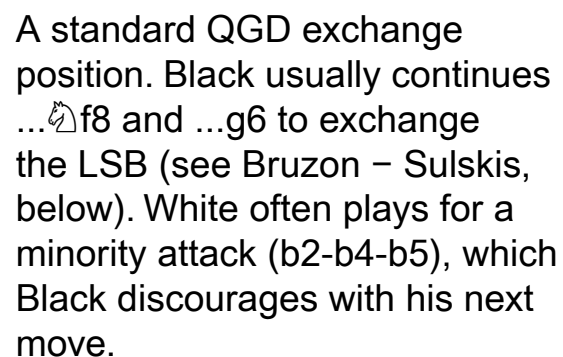
Notes: John Upper

1.♘f3 d5 2.d4 c6 3.c4 e6

4.♘c3 ♘f6 5.♘g5 ♘bd7

6.cxd5 exd5 7.e3 ♘e7 8.♘d3

0-0 9.0-0 ♖e8 10.♕c2



10...h6 11.f4 f8 12.e5 h5
13.g3 xg3 14.hxg3 f6 15.f4
xe5?! 16.fxe5 g4 17.f4
d7 18.af1 e7 19.b4 e6
20.4f2= (1-0, 41) **Marshall,F-**
Spielmann,R Moscow, 1925.

♔d7 (15...g6!) 16. ♔xd7 ♘xd7
17. a4± (1-0, 71) **Kortchnoi, V–Karpov, A** WCh, Baguio City, 1978.

Black having spent a tempo to slow a minority attack, White goes for a Pillsbury-style kingside attack instead.

11. ♖ae1 g6 12. ♘f4 ♞f8 13. h3
 ♞e6 14. ♘h2 ♞g7 15. ♞e5 ♘f5
 16. f3 ♘xd3 17. ♞xd3= Bruzon
 Batista, L (2648)–Sulskis, S
 (2518) Calvia, 2006 (1-0, 60).

11...♖xe5! looks like a surprisingly good temporary pawn sac 12.dxe5 ♘g4!
(12...♞e4? 13.♙xe4 dxe4
14.♖ad1 ♚b6 (14...♚c7?
15.♘d5!+-) 15.♙xe7 ♖xe7
16.♚xe4±) 13.♙xh7+ ♔h8 14.♙f4
♙f8= (14...♙h4!?).

14...♖b6 threatens to trap the
♘e5 with ...f6. 15.f5! ♘fd7
16.♘g4 ♔g5 17.h3±.

16.h3

16.f5± is the typical space-gaining push in these structures, aiming to follow with e4.

18.f5 gxf5 19.gxf5!± White's pieces can get to the kingside faster than Black's.

**18...♘e6 19.♔h1 c5 20.♖g1
cxd4 21.exd4**

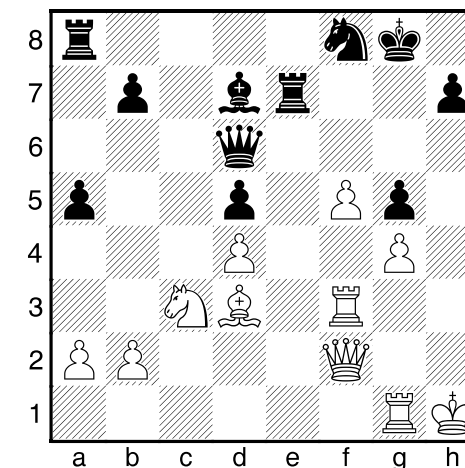


Defends the light squares
against h4-h5, but has no future
after f4-f5. Better was 21...♘d8±.

22.h4 ♖e7

22...h6 23.h5±.

23.f5! g5 24.hxg5 fxg5



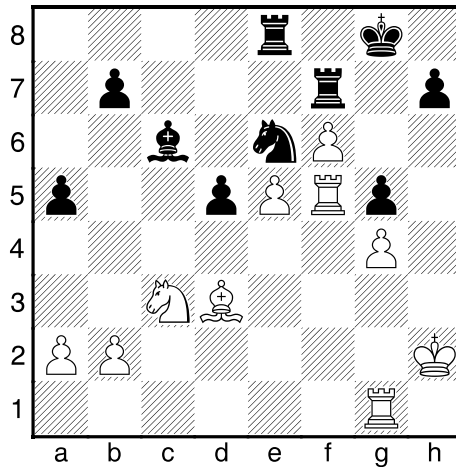
White has a huge advantage:
the protected passer on f5
dominates Black's minors, and
Black's h- and g-pawns can be
targeted.

25.f6?

This secures connected passed pawns, but allows Black's  and  good squares which blockade the passers. Stockfish rates this as equivalent to a two-pawn error.

25. ♔g2± prepares ♖h1-h5 tying Black to the defence of the g- and h-pawns.

25... ♖f7 26. ♔e3 ♘e6! 27. ♔e5 ♔xe5! 28. dxe5 ♙c6 29. ♔h2 ♖e8 30. ♖f5



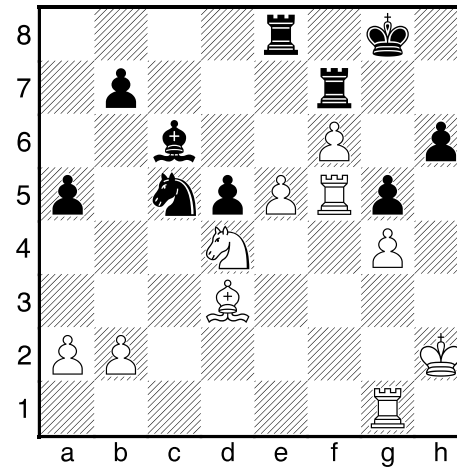
30... h6

30... ♘c5!!∞ a fantastic pawn sac
31. ♖xg5+ ♔f8 32. ♙b5 (32. ♙c2 d4∞) 32... ♘d7! 33. ♖e1 h6! 34. ♖f5 (34. ♖h5? ♘xf6±) 34... ♘xf6∞.

31. ♘e2?

31. ♘b5!± heading for d6, and
31... ♙xb5 32. ♙xb5 ♖d8 33. ♔g3! preparing ♖h1 (and ♙d3 if ... ♔h7).

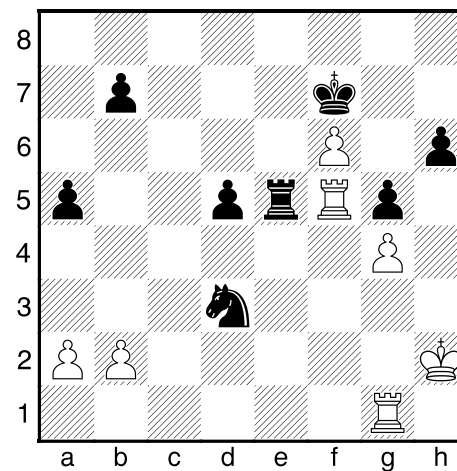
31... ♘c5 32. ♘d4



32... ♙d7

32... ♘xd3 33. e6 ♘f4 34. exf7+ ♔xf7∞ White has an exchange for a pawn, but how does he free his ♖f5?.

33. ♙b5□± ♙xb5 34. ♘xb5 ♘d3 35. ♘d6 ♖xe5 36. ♘xf7 ♔xf7



37. ♖d1?

37. ♖gf1! and now:

Back, and to the left....

1. 14m 17s

Noritsyn reaches for Queen



2. 14m 18s

N puts R on board, S puts pieces from left hand on table while reaching for Q



3. 14m 46s

"The Queen was available."

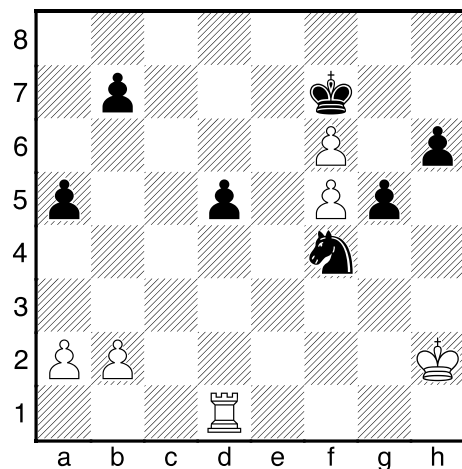




grabbing pawns but leaving White with two ♖s loses:
37...♖e2+ 38.♔g3 ♖xb2 39.♖xd5 ♘f4 40.♖d6+- and brings the ♖ to the e-file;

but 37...♖xf5 38.♖xf5 ♘f4 39.♔g3+- Black will run out of moves, and have to allow the ♖ out by moving his ♘ or d5 pawn.

37...♖xf5 38.gxf5 ♘f4



To me, White looks totally busted; but Stockfish and Leela rate this position as equal because White has a very nice way to activate his ♖ and pawns...

39.♖c1?!

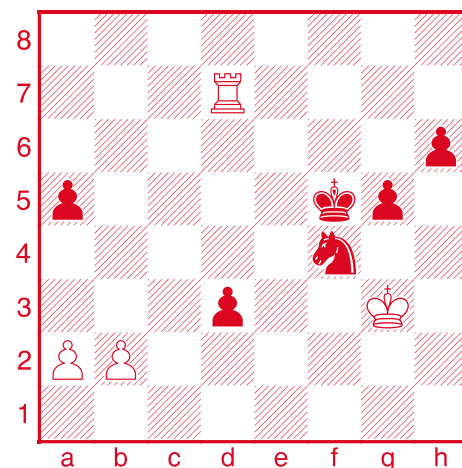
39.a4! ♔xf6 40.b4! b6 (40... axb4?? 41.♖d4+-) 41.♖c1 ♔xf5

42.♖c6 d4 43.♖xb6 ♘d5!
44.♖b5 (44.bxa5 ♘xb6 45.axb6 d3 46.b7=) 44...♔e4 45.bxa5 d3 46.a6 d2 47.♖xd5 ♔xd5 48.a7=.

39...♔xf6 40.♖c7?
△40.b4.

40...d4 41.♖xb7 d3+- 42.♖d7 42.b4!? axb4 (42...d2 43.♖d7+-) 43.♖xb4 ♔xf5 44.a4 ♔e5+-.

42...♔xf5+- 43.♔g3



Pretend this is an endgame study and find Black's most elegant win.

43...♔e4

Good enough, but 43...♔e6!! is both pretty and immediately decisive. Leaving the d-file

4. 15m 03s

It's not an illegal move, but it's a Rook... it's clearly written in the rules.



5. 15m 16s

Noritsyn indicates that the clock has not been properly restarted.



6. 16m 41s

Black resigns.



allows ...d2 and promotion, but 44.♖d8 ♔e7!-+ and the ♖ runs out of safe squares on the d-file!

44.♔f2 h5 45.a4 h4 46.b4

White's only try.

Black is winning, but it's difficult. And at blitz time control, *and* after 9 rounds in the Zonal followed by 4 rounds of rapid, it would be nearly superhuman.

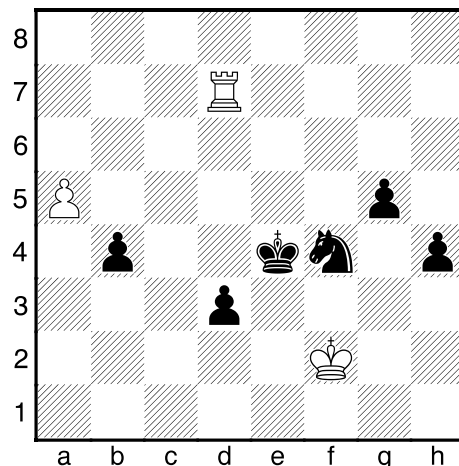
The game now degenerates into a series of blunders.

46...axb4??

46...g4□-+ 47.bxa5 g3+□

48.♔e1 (48.♔g1 allows a ♖e2+ controlling the promotion square.) 48...h3 49.a6 h2-+.

47.a5=



47...h3??

47...b3□= 48.a6 b2 49.a7

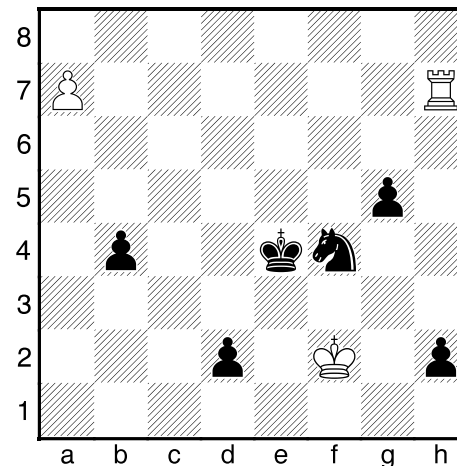
♖h3+□ 50.♔g2 ♖f4+□ 51.♔h2 b1♖ 52.a8♖+ ♔e3 53.♖e7+□ ♔f2 54.♖a7+□ ♔f3 55.♖e3+ ♔g4□ 56.♖d7+ ♔h5 57.♖h7+ ♔g4 58.♖d7+=.

48.a6+- h2 49.♖h7??

49.a7+- ♖d5 50.a8♖ h1♖

51.♖xd5+ skewers the new ♖.

49...d2□= 50.a7



50...d1♖

Of course, this is not the move Black intended (50...d1♖=). He couldn't find a spare ♖, and put an upside-down ♖ on the board. The Arbiter stopped the game, explained that an upside-down ♖ is still a ♖, and the game continued...

51.a8♖+ ♖d5 52.♖xh2 ♖d2+ 53.♔g3 ♖d3+ 54.♔g4 ♔d4 55.♖a7+ ♔c4 56.♖a6+ ♔d4 57.♖a1+ ♖c3 58.♖h8 ♔c4 59.♖b2 ♖d4+ 60.♔xg5 ♖d5+ 61.♔g6 ♖d6+ 62.♔f7 ♖d7+ 63.♔e6 ♖c7 64.♖h4+
Black resigned.

1-0

Appeal

Nikolay appealed the result.

His appeal was rejected by the National Appeals Committee by a vote of 3-1:

- IA Pierre Dénommée recused himself as he was involved in the affair in question.
- Ilia Bluvshstein: for.
- IA Aris Marghetis: against.
- IA Lyle Craver: against.
- IA Mark Dutton: against.

This result made **GM Bator Sambuev** the 2017 Canadian Champion.

Links

The **screencaps** of the tie-break are from this **HiDef Video**:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qBNEcRgHkvE>

They were first analyzed on a **CFC Newsfeed** post:

<https://chess.ca/newsfeed/node/972>

which has become, by a factor of 10, the most read story on the feed. In it, I noted that of Bator's captures during the final blitz game, about half ended up in his left hand, and half ended up on the table.

Appeals Committee Decision

<https://chess.ca/newsfeed/node/976>

chess.com report

<https://www.chess.com/news/view/controversial-finish-to-canadian-chess-championship-5047>

photos: John Upper

thanks to:

- IA **Vadim Tsy-pin** for arranging to allow me to take pix during rounds 3 and 4.
- IA **Aris Marghetis** for the FIDE Arbiters' Newsletter.



Reactions...

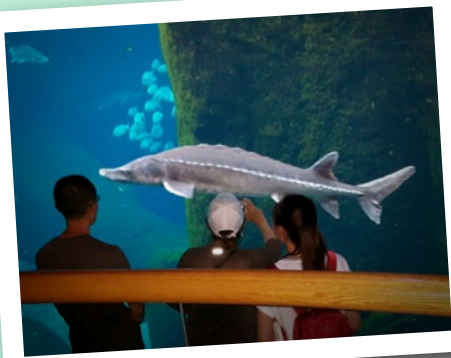
the playoff final was chess news around the world:

chess.com reported it, with comments from the players and other competitors, updated the story through the appeal, and has attracted 483 comments.

the **CFC Newsfeed** article on it had more than 10x hits than any other story in five years.

the very next issue of the **FIDE Arbiter's Magazine** had a full-page report and analysis, which you can read... if you just point your eyes to the right...

Biodome
Next door.



FIDE Arbiters' Magazine

(No.5, September 2017; p.15)

Promoting to Inverted Rook

Sometimes players will unintentionally hold one or more captured pieces in their free hand. Bator Sambuev did so in this game, including holding the Black Queen after capturing it in the middlegame, until this endgame position:



Note that Bator Sambuev is probably unintentionally holding multiple captured Black pieces at this point. Also note in the above position, that there are THREE pawns (a7 for White, d2 & h2 for Black) that could be promoted on their next move. However, neither the arbiters nor the organizers had provided extra queens for this board. Whereas doing so is not mandatory, it is a good practice, in order to avoid problems like what happened.

Noritsyn now wanted to play 50.... d1=Q, but he was running very low in time, and couldn't readily find a Black Queen. Therefore Noritsyn "promoted" his pawn on d2 to an inverted (upside down) Rook on d1, announcing it as a Queen.

The arbiter correctly stopped the clock, and declared the inverted rook to be a rook. This is consistent with [Laws of Chess 4.4](#) (and with the Arbiters' Manual):

If a player having the move ... promotes a pawn, the choice of the piece is finalised when the piece has touched the square of promotion.

Inverted rook does not exist as a separated piece and therefore it is a rook!

It seemed unfortunate that Noritsyn was under such tremendous pressure, but his solution in that situation would have been to stop the clock immediately and ask the arbiter for a Black Queen. This is allowed within [Article 6.11.2 of the Laws of Chess](#):

A player may stop the chessclock only in order to seek the arbiter's assistance, for example when promotion has taken place and the piece required is not available.

Nevertheless, in case of upcoming promotions in the game and especially if there is a time trouble, it is better for the Arbiters to take care and bring in advance on the table additional pieces, in order to be available for the players.

- IA Aris Marghetis,
Secretary of the FIDE Arbiters' Commission



Canadian Championship Zonal 2.2

#	Player	CFC	TPR	Rd.1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Total
1	Noritsyn, Nikolay	2754	2633	+5	+8	+22	+2	+6	+3	=10	=4	+14	8
2	Sambuev, Bator	2609	2667	+11	+3	+24	-1	+5	+4	+7	+10	+6	8
3	Thavandiran, Shiyam	2474	2521	+23	-2	+19	+13	+22	-1	+16	+5	-4	6
4	Yu, Zong Yang	2466	2483	+18	-16	=13	+25	+23	-2	+19	=1	+3	6
5	Itkin, David	2315	2448	-1	+29	+28	+7	-2	=6	+8	-3	+12	5.5
6	Hambleton, Aman	2547	2376	+19	=10	=7	+12	-1	=5	=9	+11	-2	5
7	Clyde, Jordan	1946	2351	=26	+9	=6	-5	+11	=16	-2	+15	=13	5
8	Plotkin, Victor	2380	2323	+17	-1	-23	+15	=13	=12	-5	+18	+16	5
9	Sohal, Tanraj S.	2383	2290	=13	-7	+21	+28	=16	=10	=6	-12	+17	5
10	Zhang, Yuanchen	2357	2438	+20	=6	=16	=11	+24	=9	=1	-2	-0	4.5
11	Tomb, Maroun	2252	2275	-2	+17	+15	=10	-7	=13	=12	-6	+20	4.5
12	Oussedik, Elias	2334	2270	-22	+26	+27	-6	=25	=8	=11	+9	-5	4.5
13	Huang, Qiuyu	2239	2243	=9	+21	=4	-3	=8	=11	=15	=16	=7	4.5
14	Talukdar, Rohan	2265	2230	-28	-19	=17	-21	+26	+18	+24	+20	-1	4.5
15	Gaisinsky, Adam	2056	2188	-16	+18	-11	-8	+17	+20	=13	-7	+21	4.5
16	Song, Samuel	2280	2275	+15	+4	=10	-22	=9	=7	-3	=13	-8	4
17	Mills, Morgon	2206	2128	-8	-11	=14	=18	-15	+26	+27	+24	-9	4
18	Masse, Hugues	2259	2094	-4	-15	=20	=17	+29	-14	+26	-8	+27	4
19	Chabot, Roland	2192	2225	-6	+14	-3	=27	+21	+24	-4	-0	-0	3.5
20	Durette, Francis	2183	2029	-10	-23	=18	+26	+27	-15	+21	-14	-11	3.5
21	Lecomte, Andre	1947	2002	=25	-13	-9	+14	-19	+27	-20	+0	-15	3.5
22	Le Siege, Alexandre	2572	2488	+12	+28	-1	+16	-3	-0	-0	-0	-0	3
23	Beaulieu, Eric	2218	2351	-3	+20	+8	=24	-4	-0	-0	-0	-0	2.5
24	Duong, Thanh Nha	2251	2069	+27	+25	-2	=23	-10	-19	-14	-17	-0	2.5
25	Bolduc, Steve	2277	2136	=21	-24	+26	-4	=12	-0	-0	-0	-0	2
26	Marin, Sam	2081	1887	=7	-12	-25	-20	-14	-17	-18	+27	-0	1.5
27	Ostaci, Liviu	1624	1832	-24	+0	-12	=19	-20	-21	-17	-26	-18	1.5
28	Kleinman, Michael	2356	2184	+14	-22	-5	-9	-0	-0	-0	-0	-0	1
29	Marchand, Jacques	1988	1887	-0	-5	-0	+0	-18	-0	-0	-0	-0	1



*Sam Song v Yuanchen Zhang
bare kings!*

*FM Shiyam Thavandiran
3rd-4th*

Steve Bolduc v Zong Yang Yu



Officials:

Vadim Tsy-pin,
Raymond Des-
jardins, Bernard
Ouimet, Pierre
Denommée.



Chess Canada
Embiggened



2017 CYCC and Canadian Open were held in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, July 6-10 and July 8-16, 2017.

CYCC

The CYCC is a 7-round tournament in Open and Girls sections for the U8, U10, U12, U14, U16 and U18 Canadian Championships. It was held at Sault College in Sault Ste Marie, Ontario, July 6-10, 2017.

260 players entered from across Canada. That is about 25% fewer than CYCCs held in bigger cities like Montreal or Toronto, but very good for a city with no history of holding major chess events.

Side events included simul by **GM Aryan Chopra**, **GM Andriy Vovk**, and **IM Aman Hambleton**, lectures by **GM Alex**

Lenderman and **IM David Cummings**, a CYCC bughouse tournament, and blitz tournaments for *both* the CYCC and Canadian Open! The organizers — FM Andrew and parents Roman and Daphne Peredun — had been working on this since 2015 and have reason to be proud.

Chess Canada has ten annotated games from the CYCC, beginning with two annotated by the winner of the U18 Open, FM John Doknjas.

Notes: FM John Doknjas Petersen, Caleb (2281) Doknjas, John (2107)

A65
2017 CYCC U18 Sault Ste. Marie
(5), 08.07.2017

This year, the Canadian Youth Chess Championship was held in Sault St. Marie. The city is located in the south of Ontario geographically, but it is north of the province's major cities (Ottawa, Toronto, etc). The weather

was constantly humid, due to the combination of the heat and being located between three of the Great Lakes. Despite this, the playing hall was cool, due to the abundance of air conditioning in the Sault

College. At this point in the tournament, I was sitting at a score of 2.5 pts./4 games. The current leader (Joey Zhong) had a perfect 4/4, and was leading the tournament confidently. My opponent in this game, Caleb Petersen, had improved very impressively over the last two years (having gained around 300 rating points). Last year he won the U16 CYCC, and I'm sure he will become a National Master in the near future. I spent virtually all my time before this game preparing for 1. e4, since that's what Caleb almost always played....

1.d4

So much for that. A surprise!

1...♘f6 2.c4 c5

I thought for a little bit before choosing to play this move. I figured my opponent must have prepared something against my usual Benoni – it wouldn't make much sense for him to have played 1. d4. I considered playing the Nimzo Indian, taking the chance that he would not know much theory in that line.





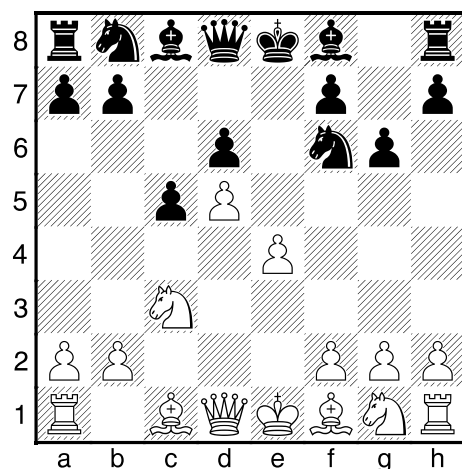
Chess Canada Embiggened

However, my knowledge wasn't too great either in that opening. In the end I stuck to my normal opening – I knew it better, and I believe it was the principled choice.

3.d5 e6 4.♘c3 exd5 5.cxd5 d6

At this point I still did not know which line my opponent was preparing. If White pushes the e–pawn here, there's a good chance he had prepared something sharp. If White does something else, such as developing the Knight, then I knew the game would be calmer.

6.e4 g6



7.♘ge2!?

Going for an interesting setup.

After the game, Caleb told me that he saw a game I played in Reykjavik in this line (coincidentally, that was one of the games I annotated for this newsletter).

7.f4 is the sharpest alternative. 7.h3 is the Modern Variation.

7...♗g7 8.♘g3 0-0

An important moment. In my Reykjavik game I had played 8...h5, mainly in hopes of just having an interesting game. I knew my opponent had likely prepared something based on that game, and so I refrained from pushing the h–pawn. Little did I know my opponent had prepared some deep lines in this

variation too.

9.♗e2 ♖e8

A useful move, putting pressure on White's e–pawn. This prevents either of his Knights from moving, at the moment.

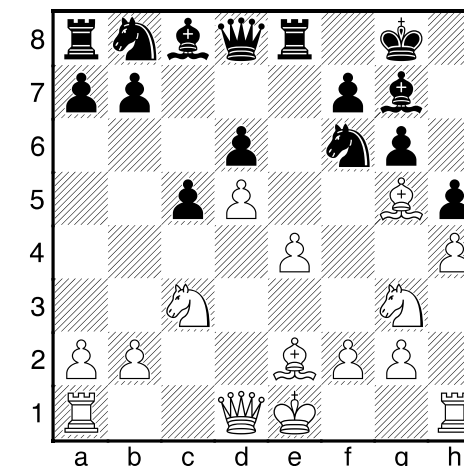
10.h4!?

A bold move! During the game I thought this move to be dubious, believing it would just weaken White and discourage Kingside castling. However, my opponent had some interesting ideas in mind.

10...h5

Of course – White cannot be allowed to push his pawn to h5.

11.♗g5



A correct move, and a necessary one. White must prevent me from attacking and capturing his h–pawn. Castling immediately would be a mistake: 11.0-0? ♘h7 and the h–pawn falls, followed by a strong Kingside attack by the black pieces.

11...♘bd7

Going for the standard Benoni piece setup. I considered 11...♘a6, but this move has its ups and downs. The upside is that I can prepare the ...b5 push sooner (the most important pawn thrust in the Benoni). The downside is that I do not defend the center as much, which



U18 top boards, round 3
Caleb Peterson vs Joey Zhong
John Doknjas vs Diwen Shi.

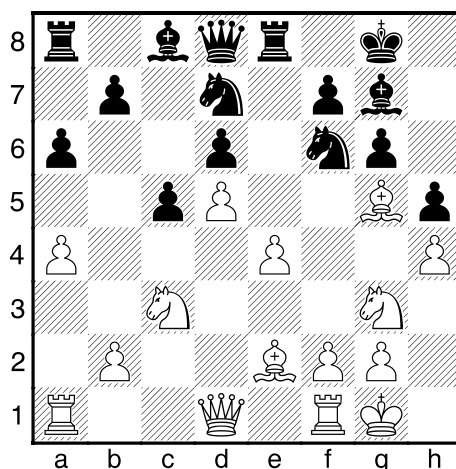


could allow White to smash through uninvited. A sample line: 11...♘a6?! 12.0-0 ♘c7 13.f4 ♖b8 14.e5! dxe5 15.f5! An important idea! White played 14.e5 in order to free up the square on e4 for the Knights, and to leave Black with a useless pawn on e5. In this position White is much better – the Black Knight on f6 feels very uncomfortable. Black's Kingside is especially vulnerable due to my h-pawn having been provoked forward by h4.

12.0-0 a6

This move controls the b5 square "with tempo", since White has to spend some time preventing me from pushing ...b5.

13.a4



13...♙c7!?

The Queen often belongs on this square in the Benoni, but here its location is quite precarious. The Queen could easily fall victim to a certain White Rook on the c-file. However, the Queen has a very important role on this square. It will support the c-pawn's advance to c4, which will open up the c5-square for ♘d7. This will allow Black's counterplay to roll out quickly on the Queenside.

13...♙a5! was another option, with the idea of luring the ♗g5 back to d2. This move may have been stronger than what I played. 14.♙d2 (14.♗d2 ♙d8 and now the h4-pawn begins to feel uncomfortable. White is more or less forced to bring the Bishop back with 15.♗g5. Draw?) 14...♖b8 15.f4 ♙b4∞ Both sides are ready to make their respective pawn advances (e5 for White, and ...b5 for Black). The game is dynamically balanced.

14.♙d2

14.♖c1 15. b4 is now a very

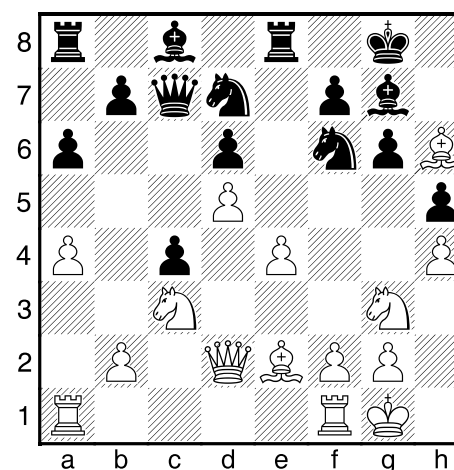
serious threat. 14...c4 There is no other good way to deal with the b4 threat. 15.b3 ♘e5∞ and Black appears to be holding the balance. 16.f4?? ♘eg4 17.bxc4 ♘e3⌘.

editor – White can also go for the sealer–sweeper maneuver shown in the note to move 11: 14.f4! c4 (14...♘h7 15.e5 dxe5 (15...♘xg5 16.hxg5±) 16.d6!±) 15.e5 dxe5 16.f5±.

14...c4

What else? Preparing the ...b5 push will take far too long.

15.♗h6!?



An interesting move: White frees up the g5-square for the Queen, while threatening to exchange off

Black's "Benoni Bishop".

15...♗h8

15...♗xh6? I considered this move for a while, but in the end rejected it. I need my Bishop to exert pressure on the h8-a1 diagonal for my counterplay to be effective. In addition, my King is far too vulnerable without the piece protecting it. 16.♙xh6 f4-f5 is coming. 16...♘e5 17.♘f5 ♗xf5 18.exf5→.

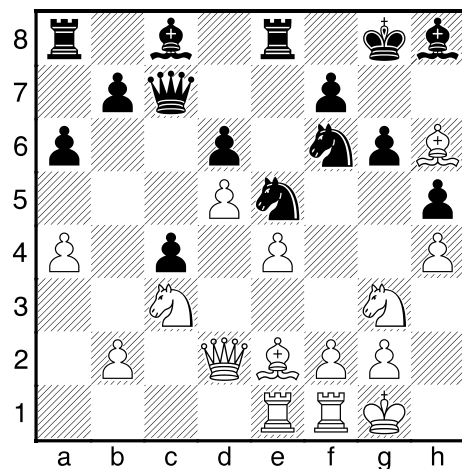
16.♖ae1?

White had played a good game up to this point, but now he makes a mistake. Delaying with ♖ae1 allows me to move my d7-Knight to e5 – once that happens, Black's counterplay disrupts White's plans.

16.♙g5! was a strong move that I think we looked at after the game. It is very hard to meet over the board, despite what the engine says about this position. This move demonstrates some of the ideas behind White's early h4 push, which provoked ... h5. Black's Kingside is noticeably weaker, and is vulnerable to an f4-f5 push.

16...♞e5!

Seizing the opportunity.

**17.♙e3**

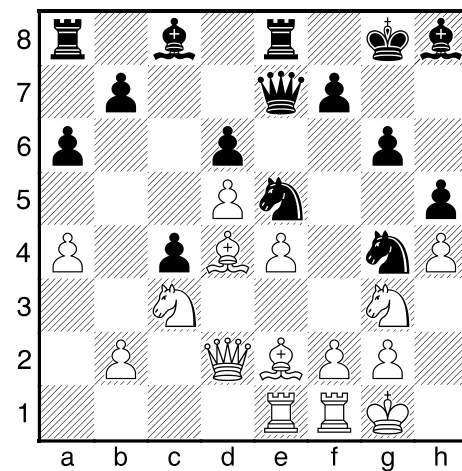
The Bishop cannot stay on h6, since it will just be a target there.

17...♞fg4!

Threatening the Bishop, as well as planning to move the Queen to the d8-h4 diagonal. The drawback of the early h4 push finally shows itself. It is important that I do not pause in my attack – any delay would allow White to repel my Knights.

18.♙d4!

The best reply. White accepts the fact that h4 is lost, and plans on exchanging off Black's h8-Bishop. This will make the Black King uncomfortable.

18...♞e7**19.♙xg4**

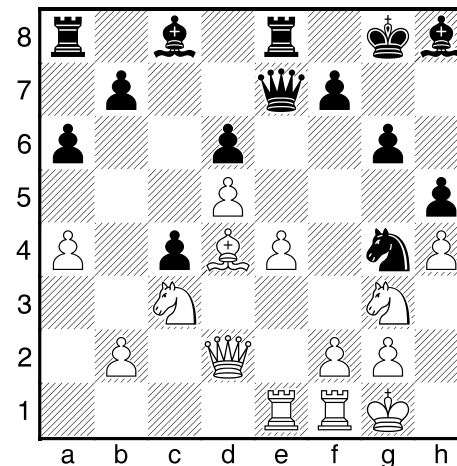
editor – it seems White can save the h-pawn with 19.f3! since the ♞g3 can't be taken after 19...♞xh4? (♞19...♞f6 20.♞h1±) 20.fxg4 ♞xg3?? (20...♙xg4 21.♞h1! Black has two pawns for the piece and some attacking chances, but they won't be enough.) 21.♙f2+- traps the ♞.

19...♞xg4!

The correct decision.

19...hxg4? 20.h5→; 19...♙xg4?! allows White a dangerous attack: 20.f4 ♞d3 21.♙xh8 ♞xh8 22.f5!? (22.♞e3?! is objectively the best move, but it offers White little practical chances to win.) 22...♞xe1 In

the game this position seemed pretty dangerous to me. Black is definitely better, but White has too many chances.

**20.f3!**

A good idea – White uses Black's Knight to push his f-pawn with tempo.

20.♙xh8?? ♞xh4 followed by mate in 1.

20...♞e5

20...♞xh4?? 21.fxg4 ♞xg3 22.♙xh8 ♞xh8 23.gxh5±.

21.f4 ♞g4

21...♞d3 I considered this move, but rejected it since the Knight on d3 is not stable. The c4-pawn can be easily undermined with b3: 22.♙xh8 ♞xh8 (22...♞xe1?

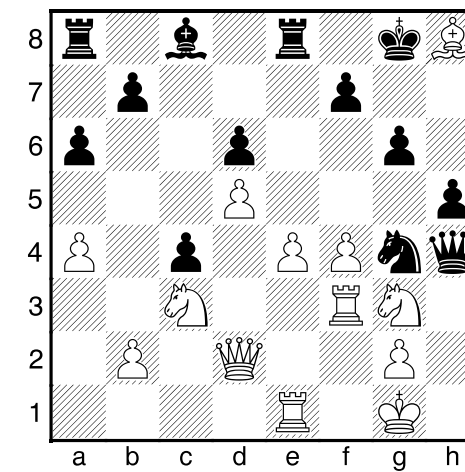
23.♞d4±) 23.♞e3 ♞xh4 24.b3 Black is better, but White has chances.

22.♙xh8 ♞xh4!

An important intermezzo. This move allows Black to start his attack first.

22...♞xh8? 23.♞d4+ and White starts making threats before Black can.

editor – SF says White has to hold the kingside first, with 23.♞h1 or 23.♞f3 (allowing ♞f1) when it's anybody's game; e.g. 23.♞h1 ♞xh4 24.g3□.

23.♞f3

Necessary: ...♞h2# was threatened.





23...♔h2+

Pushing the King to the more vulnerable square of f1, before taking back on h8. During the game I remember thinking a while on whether or not I should play ...♔h2+. In retrospect, it seems odd that I didn't immediately choose this move. Likely, the effects of time trouble were starting to seep into the game.

24.♕f1 ♖xh8 25.♔d4+!

A good move, centralizing the Queen with tempo. From d4 it can defend the White King, while being in a position to attack the Black King.

25...♖g8 26.♔xc4?

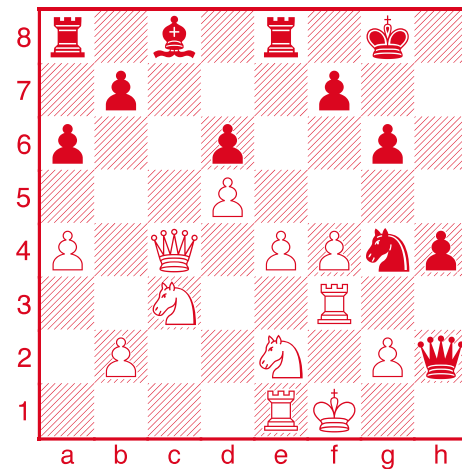
Putting the Queen on a worse square, and giving Black time to execute a tactical combination.

26.e5! gives White serious counterplay, especially when the position is considered in time trouble.

26...h4

Pushing the g3-Knight away so ...♔h1+ can be played.

27.♘ge2



27...h3!!

A startling move! I found this idea by seeing two tactical themes, and then just needing a way to use them together. The two tactical ideas are: 1) ...♘e3+, forking the King and Queen. If only ♖f3 wasn't there... 2) The second idea is shown in the following variation, where I can win the exchange but my Queen gets trapped: 27...♔h1+? 28.♘g1 ♘h2+ 29.♕f2 ♘xf3 30.♘xf3 I have won the exchange, but my

PRO TIP

If your opponent plays like this, call an arbiter and bring a metal detector.

Queen is trapped.

28.gxh3

The only move – 28...hxg2+ was threatened, and White cannot take on h3 with the Rook.

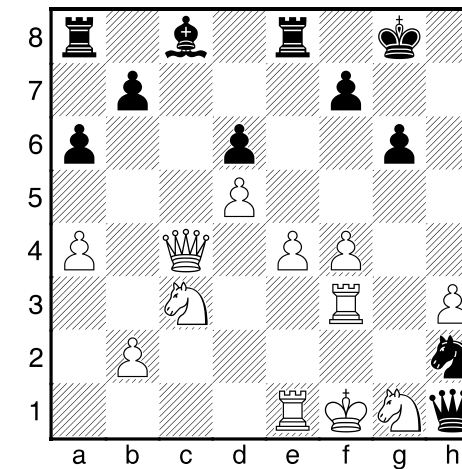
28.♖xh3? Now the first tactical idea comes into play: 28...♔xh3! 29.gxh3 ♘e3+ 30.♕f2 ♘xc4-+ White is down a Rook for a pawn.

28...♔h1+

editor – Black's move is both winning and human, but the computer finds an even stronger, though much more complex, way to win: 28...♘f2!! 29.♖c1 (29.♖xf2? ♘xh3+ mates.) 29...♘xh3+ 30.♕e1 ♘xe4 31.♘xe4 ♔h1+ 32.♕f2 (32.♕d2 ♖xf3 33.♘f6+ ♕f8 34.♘xe8 ♖xe8 35.♖c3-+ Black is up only a pawn, but computers rate it as -4.5.) 32...♔g2+ 33.♕e3 ♘f5 34.♖g1 (34.♘2c3 ♘xe4 35.♘xe4 f5-+) 34...♔h2 35.♖f2 ♔h3+ 36.♖f3 ♔h4 37.♘2c3 ♖xe4+ 38.♘xe4 ♖e8-+.

Pro Tip: If your opponent plays like this, call the arbiter and bring a metal detector.

29.♘g1 ♘h2+



30.♕f2

Obviously better than 30.♕e2 ♘xf3 31.♘xf3 ♔g2-+.

30...♘xf3 31.♘xf3 ♔xh3

The point of playing 27...h3 – the Queen is able to escape.

32.♖g1

A good move, trying to get counterplay against the Black King.

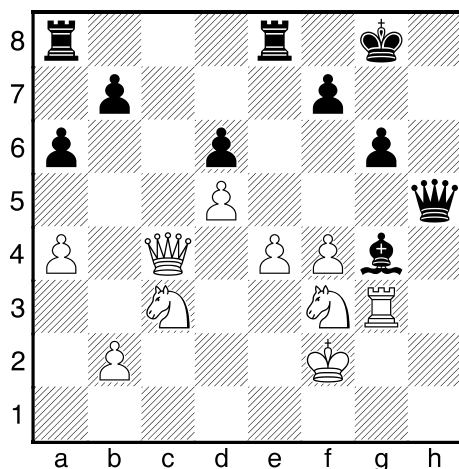
editor – 32.f5 might be better, with the same idea as ♖g1, but stopping Black's next.

32...♘g4

Not relinquishing my attack. It would have been a mistake to release my pressure and just be

content with the extra exchange
– White still has dangerous
attacking ideas.

33. ♖g3 ♔h5



The Queen is safe on this
square, and it prepares to invade
White's camp after the f3-Knight
is captured.

34. ♔c7?

Going for counterplay, but this
move allows Black to end things
quickly.

34. ♔f1 defending the White
King, and preparing to start
counterplay on the Kingside
against Black's King.

34... ♕xf3 35. ♖xf3 ♔h2+
The b2-pawn will fall, and

White's King lacks a proper
defence.

36. ♖e3 ♕xb2 37. ♖f2 ♔b4

Threatening 38. ... ♖ac8. If White's
Knight moves from c3, then e4
drops and it is over.

38. ♖e2 ♕xe4+ 39. ♔d2 ♖ac8

0-1



FM John Doknjas
will publish his *second*
opening book with
Everyman: *Opening
Repertoire: The Modern
Benoni*.

(due: May 2020)

Notes: FM John Doknjas Zhong, Joey (2156) Doknjas, John (2281)

A61

2017 CYCC U18 Sault Ste. Marie
(6), 09.07.2017

Before this game I had 3.5 pts./5
games, while my opponent had
4.5 pts./5 games (having drawn
his first game in the previous
round). I knew that I had to win
this game if I wanted a shot at
First Place – drawing would
leave me a full point behind.
After winning my last game, I
now had a very real chance to
come first in the tournament.
Before this game I spent some
time reviewing 1.e4 and English
lines. And once again I was
surprised early on...

1.d4

Didn't I just face this?

1... ♖f6 2.c4 c5

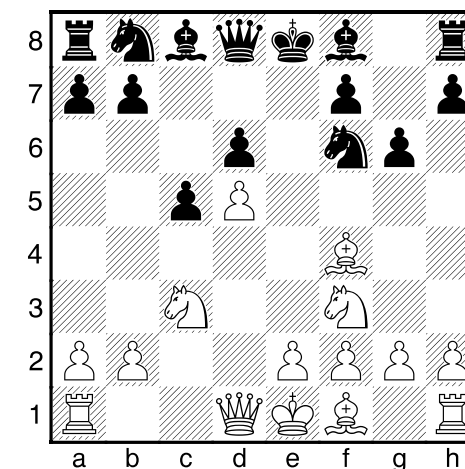
Unlike my previous game with
Caleb Petersen, this time I didn't
think much before playing this
move. While 1.d4 is not Joey's

main opening, he has played it in
the past. If I tried some defence
other than the Benoni, he would
probably know it better than me
(considering I had not prepared
much for 1.d4 before the game).

**3.d5 e6 4. ♖c3 exd5 5.cxd5
d6 6. ♖f3**

Signifying that he intends to
play some solid line, avoiding
sharp variations. My opponent's
decision could have been
due to his one point lead in
the tournament at this point.
However, danger has a way of
seeping into all types of Benoni
positions – this game was no
exception.

6...g6 7. ♖f4



An interesting line that has





Chess Canada Embiggened

gained some popularity recently. White plans to move his e-pawn to e3, in order to prevent Black from having a clear target in the center. White will also play h3, in order to give the f4 Bishop a safe home on h2. From this square, it will bear down on the backward d6-pawn.

7...♙g7!?

Objectively, this is not the best move. I was taking a chance on the fact that my opponent had mainly prepared for 7...a6, which I have played in the past. Judging by his fairly long think, my risk paid off.

7...a6 is the main move, and after 8.a4 ♙g7 9.h3 0-0 10.e3 ♔e7 11.♙e2 ♘bd7 12.0-0 ♘e8 with a playable position – both White and Black can play on all sides of the board.

8.h3?!

White cannot treat this 7...♙g7 line the same way he would treat 7...a6. The drawback of excluding ...a6 must be taken advantage of: 8.♔a4+ ♙d7 9.♔b3 ♔c7 10.e4 With a sharp, unbalanced game. This kind

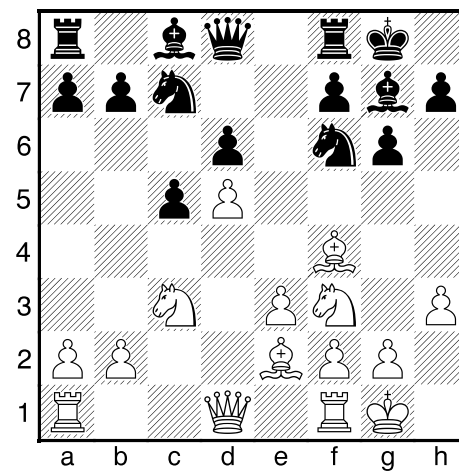
of position would provide both sides with winning chances – something that would be good for me and not my opponent (given our current standings in the tournament).

8...0-0 9.e3 ♘a6!

The advantage of not playing ...a6! Black is now able to prepare the ...b5 push quickly. It is important to note that Black can get away with playing ...♘a6, since White is not being aggressive yet in the center.

9...a6 10.a4 transposes into the 7...a6 line.

10.♙e2 ♘c7 11.0-0



11...♔e8

A prophylactic move – I do not

want White pushing his pawn to e4 and then to e5; e.g. 11...♖b8?! 12.e4! b5? 13.e5↑.

12.♙h2

Prophylaxis in return! It is not often this type of play is seen from both sides in the Benoni.

12...a6

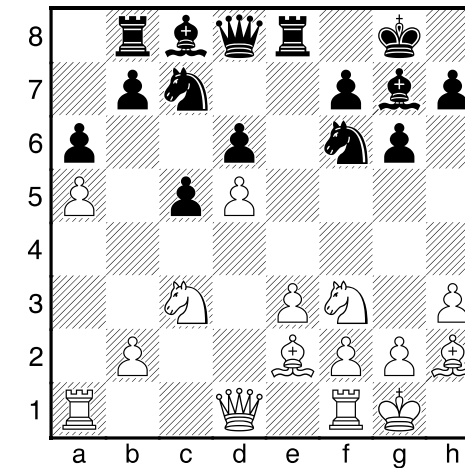
Following the plan of pushing ...b5

12...b6!? is another idea, with the plan of playing 13...♙b7 and trying to win the isolated d5 pawn. In the game I was hoping to push ...b5 and play ...♙b7, but in retrospect it was foolish to hope for this. 13.♔b3 ♙b7 14.♖ad1 ♘e4↑.

13.a4 ♖b8?

13...b6! was better, in order to stop White from playing 14.a5. In the game I was afraid of ♔b3 ideas, and figured I needed to play ...b5 as soon as possible. It is obvious now that my fears were just ghosts, likely created by me spending far too much time thinking. 14.♔b3 ♖b8 Black is very comfortable – White lacks a constructive plan.

14.a5



14...b5!?

Now both sides get play on the Queenside.

14...♙f5 was perhaps more sensible. I was so wrapped up in the ...b5 plan that I didn't spend much time considering other moves.

editor – trading a pair of minors with 14...♘e4 is sensible too.

15.axb6 ♖xb6 16.♘d2!

Immediately taking advantage of Black's somewhat premature burst of activity.

16...♙f8

Now White has a strong initiative.

16...♖xb2!? 17.♘c4 ♖xe2 I missed this idea during the game. 18.♙xe2 ♘fxd5 19.♘xd5 ♘xd5 20.♘xd6 ♖e6 21.♖ad1 ♖xd6∞ 22.♙xd6 ♙xd6 23.♙f3±, but White is better nonetheless.

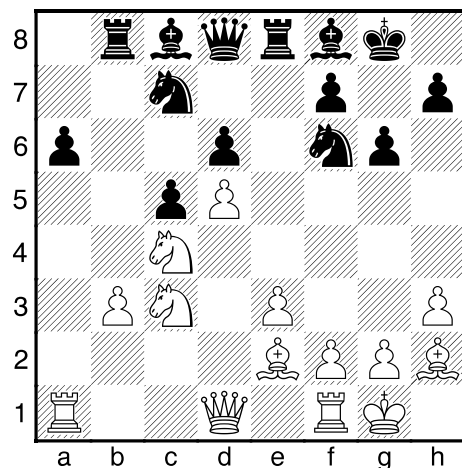
17.♘c4 ♖b4?!

A move without a plan. The Rook is just a target on b4, and it ruins ideas I have with playing ...♘b5.

18.b3!

A strong defensive move, solidifying operations on the Queenside.

18...♖b8



Better late than never...

19.♙f3?

This allows me counterplay.

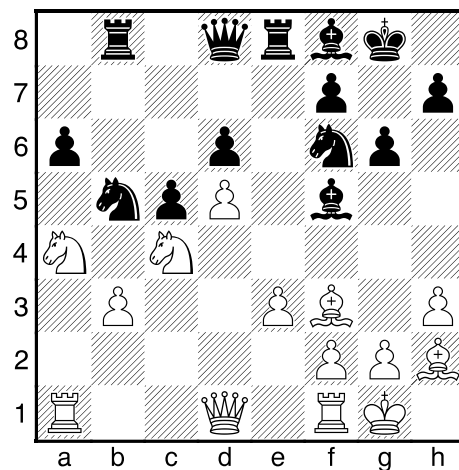
19.♘a5! would have given White a near decisive advantage.

19...♙d7 20.♘c6 ♙xc6 21.dxc6 ♖b6 22.♙f3± with two Bishops, a protected passed pawn on c6, and better piece coordination. White's advantage is obvious.

19...♘b5! 20.♘a4?

Missing the ♘a5 idea once again: 20.♘xb5! axb5 21.♘a5 ♙c7 22.♘c6±.

20...♙f5



Black's cramped position begins to finally unravel – now both sides have equal chances. Psychologically, this change in events gave me a mental boost. On the other hand, these

changes were probably affecting my opponent in the opposite way. Mental states are one of the most important factors in time pressure (we were both approaching low time). The quality of how well you think can decide the game with only a few minutes left.

21.♘ab2?!

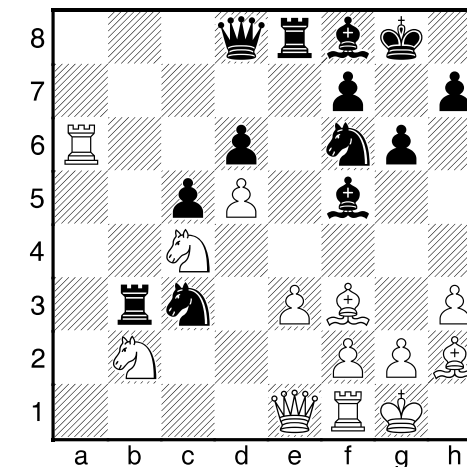
Buckling a bit under the pressure, and allowing ♘b5 to jump to c3.

21.♙d2 This standard developing move was better, when the game should be roughly equal. Sometimes it is hard to just play quiet moves in a position like this.

21...♘c3 22.♙e1 ♖xb3↑

23.♖xa6

23.♘a5!? was another option, which values having activity over a pawn. In the time scramble, this may have been the better practical choice. For example: 23...♖xb2 24.♙xc3 ♖c2 25.♙a3∞ 26.♘c6 is coming, and it is unclear how Black should answer it.



23...♘b5?!

Throwing away my advantage.

23...♘fxd5! I didn't play this during the game because I was worried about my d6-pawn falling after 24.♙xd5 ♘xd5 25.♙d1 but during the game I missed the clever 25... ♘b4!!♞, when the attacked ♘d5 is moved to safety, and ♖a6 is kicked from the 6th rank.

24.♙d1?

White should have immediately dealt with his Knights, which are in peril. 24.♙c1! Protecting both Knights, and keeping the game in balance.

editor – or 24.♙d2.





24...♖b4

Now the Knights are paralyzed, due to each other.

25.♙a4!

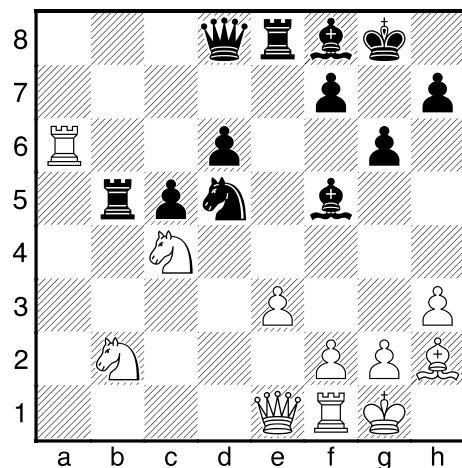
Going for counterplay – the correct choice in a time scramble. At this point my opponent was much lower than me on time – I think he only had a couple minutes left.

25.♙f3?! ♙e4 and White will lose the d5 pawn and have little counterplay.

25...♞xd5 26.♙xb5

Diverting the Rook from its post on b4, where it keeps the White Knights in stasis.

26...♖xb5



27.♞xd6!?

Going for broke – if White did not do this then he would be down a pawn and have a worse position.

27.♞d2?! is objectively better, but too passive: 27...♞b6.

27...♖xb2 28.♞xe8 ♙d3!?

My opponent was playing purely on 30 second increment at this point, and so I decided to take a risk with this move. I guessed that he would not have time to find 29.♞a5, which causes me some problems. A move like 28...♙d3 causes a player to spend valuable time reassessing the position – it is extremely difficult to find the best move with the remaining seconds.

28...♞xe8 is safer, but led to a position which I thought could be difficult to win. In retrospect, the position doesn't look too difficult to win, but I was not thinking clearly in the time scramble.

29.♞a1?

Curiously, after this move all of White's attacked pieces are captured.

29.♞a5! ♞xe8 30.♖a8, in my calculations I didn't really like this position – after all, it seemed like a worse version of the 28...♞xe8 line. However, I knew this position would probably be winning after some hard work.

29...♙xa6 30.♞xb2 ♙xf1 31.♙xf1 ♞xe8

A very tense game, right down to the end! This was the penultimate round, and winning put me in the lead with Joey and Diwen Shi. I ended up winning

my last game, while Joey and Diwen drew playing each other. I've played in the CYCC every year since 2007 when it was in Ottawa. Winning the National Championship was a nice way to finish off my last Canadian Youth Chess Championship.

0-1

U18 Winners

Andrew Colvin John Doknjas
Diwen Shi Joey Zhong



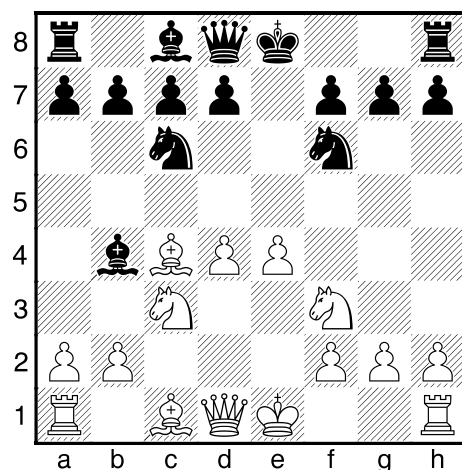
Ma, Lily (820) Gao, Lucy (1167)

C54

CYCC U08 w Sault Ste-Marie
CAN (5), 08.07.2017

Notes: John Upper

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙c4
♙c5 4.c3 ♘f6 5.d4 exd4
6.cxd4 ♙b4+ 7.♘c3



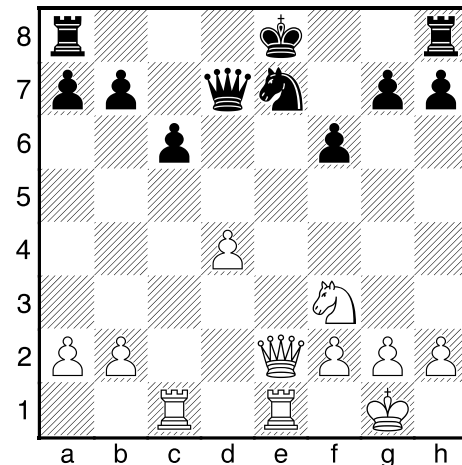
The sharpest, but possibly not objectively sound. Both ♙d2 and ♘bd2 are reasonable.

7...♘xe4

7...d5?! was the start of one of the most famous games in chess history: 8.exd5 ♘xd5 9.0-0 ♙e6 10.♙g5 ♙e7 11.♙xd5 ♙xd5 12.♘xd5 ♙xd5 13.♙xe7 ♘xe7 14.♖e1 f6 15.♙e2 ♙d7 16.♖ac1

c6? (♞16...♔f7)

Analysis Diagram:

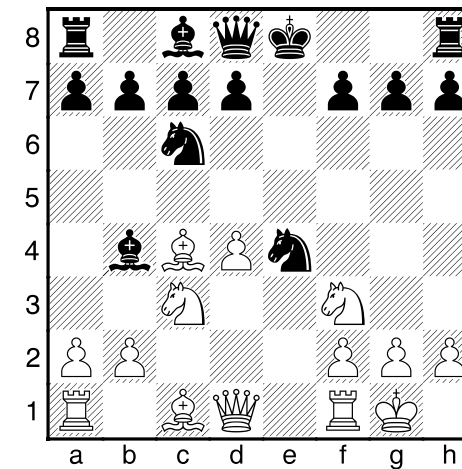


The remainder is a great example of power play and excellent calculation: 17.d5!

clearance sac, 17...cxd5 18.♘d4 ♔f7 19.♘e6 ♖hc8 20.♙g4 g6 21.♘g5+ ♔e8 22.♖xe7+ ♔f8 23.♖f7+ ♔g8 24.♖g7+ ♔h8 25.♖xh7+ and here Black infamously left the tournament hall rather than resign or let the spectators enjoy the forced win: 25...♔g8 26.♖g7+ ♔h8 (26...♔f8 27.♘h7+ ♔xg7 28.♙xd7++-) 27.♙h4+ ♔xg7 28.♙h7+ ♔f8 29.♙h8+ ♔e7 30.♙g7+ ♔e8 31.♙g8+ ♔e7 32.♙f7+ ♔d8 33.♙f8+ ♙e8 34.♘f7+ ♔d7 35.♙d6#.

Steinitz–Von Bardeleben,
Hastings, 1895 (1-0, 27)

8.0-0



8...♙xc3

No Italian game analysis is complete without at least one classic example of "Black gets greedy": 8...♙xc3 9.bxc3 ♙xc3 (♞9...d5) 10.♙b3 (10.♙a3!) 10...♙xa1? (10...d5!±) 11.♙xf7++- ♔f8 12.♙g5! ♘e7 (12...♘xd4 13.♙a3++-) 13.♘e5 (13.♖e1!) 13...♙xd4 14.♙g6! d5 15.♙f3+ ♙f5 16.♙xf5 ♙xe5 17.♙e6+ ♙f6 18.♙xf6 ♔e8 19.♙xg7 1-0 Greco–NN Rome, 1620.

9.d5

The Møller Attack.

9...♘e5

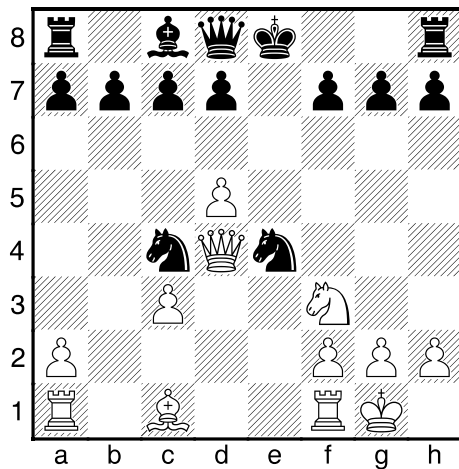
9...♙f6 also scores well for Black.



U8g Winnie Zhuang & Lily Ma



10.bxc3 ♖xc4 11.♔d4



11...♘cd6

Here are two good alternatives: [GM Victor Bologan](#), in *Bologan's Black Weapons in the Open Games* (NiC, 2014) continues: **11...0-0!** 12.♔xe4 ♘d6 13.♔f4 ♘e8 14.♖e1 (14.d6 ♘xd6 15.♙a3 b6 16.♖ad1 ♙a6 17.♖fe1 ♖e8 18.♙xd6 cxd6 19.♖xe8+ ♔xe8+ (0-1, 51) Leygue, D (2242)–Flear, G (2503) France, 2003.) 14...d6 15.♔g3 ♔d7 16.h3 ♔f5 when White still has something to prove.

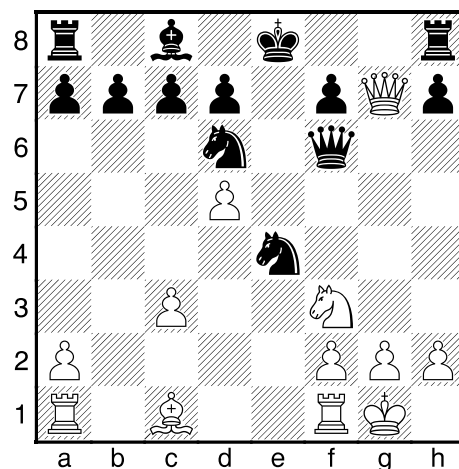
11...f5!? is recommended in [Fred Reinfeld's Complete Chess Course](#), and it is the [neural nets'](#) first choice:

12.♙g5?? ♘xg5-+ 13.♔xg7 ♖f8□

14.♘g5 ♔f6□ 15.♖fe1+ ♔d8□
16.♔xf6+ ♖xf6 17.♖e2 h6-+
(0-1, 22) [Schlechter, C–Lasker, E](#)
[London International, 1899.](#)

12.♔xc4 d6 13.♘d4 (13.♔b5+? ♔d7+ 14.♔d3 0-0 15.♖e1 ♔f7 16.c4 ♙d7 17.♙b2 ♖ae8 18.h4 h6 19.♖ab1 ♖e7 20.♔d4 b6 21.♖e2 ♖fe8 with a position that resembles a Budapest Gambit, but where White is down a pawn and does not have the ♙-pair; Black is winning, but (½-½, 49) after mutual blunders in [Estrin, Y–Ravinsky, G](#) Moscow Ch., 1953.) 13...0-0 14.f3 ♘c5 15.♙a3 b6 16.♙xc5□+ Black is a bit better after either recapture.

12.♔xg7 ♔f6



13.♙h6??

After this it's over.

Despite being a piece down, Black's exposed ♔ and weak dark squares leave White with full comp after trading ♔s: 13.♔xf6□± ♘xf6 14.♖e1+, and now King moves are objectively bad, but they do force White to find the win:

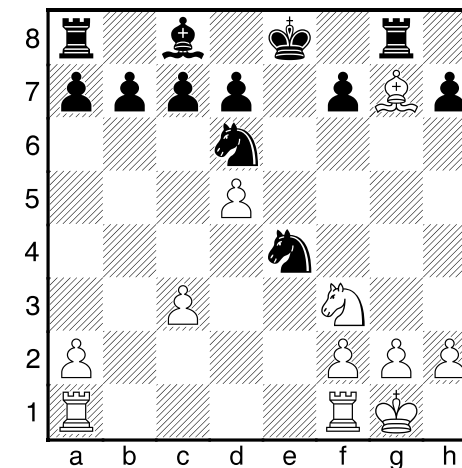
a) 14...♘fe4! best, but returns the piece to the obvious: 15.♘d2 f5 16.f3±;

b) 14...♔f8? 15.♙h6+□+- ♔g8 16.♖e5+- ♘fe4 (16...♘de4 17.♘d2! d6 18.♘xe4 dxe5 19.♘xf6#) 17.♖e1 f5 18.♖e7! b6 19.♘h4 simplest! 19...♙b7 20.♖g7+ ♔f8 21.♖xh7+ ♔g8 22.♖g7+ 1-0 Hou, Q (2284) – Kislik, E (2347) Budapest, 2011;

c) 14...♔d8? 15.♙g5□+- ♘de8 16.♖xe8+!! (16.♘e5! ♖f8 17.♘g4+-) 16...♔xe8 17.♖e1+ ♔f8 18.♙h6+ ♔g8 19.♖e5 and ♖g5# or ♖e8#, 1-0 [Greco, G–NN](#) Rome, 1620.

13...♔xg7 14.♙xg7 ♖g8

U8g Champion Lucy Gao



15.♙e5 f6!

Forces the ♙ to move and makes a safe square on f7. Black is winning, and doesn't make any mistake.

16.♙xd6 ♘xd6 17.♖fe1+ ♔f7 18.♖e2 b6 19.♖ae1





♖e8 20.h4 ♖xe2 21.♖xe2
 ♙a6 22.♖d2 ♜e4 23.♖c2
 ♙c4 24.g4 ♙xd5 25.g5
 fxg5 26.hxg5 d6 27.c4 ♙b7
 28.♙h2 ♙g6 29.♙h3 ♜xg5+
 30.♜xg5 ♙xg5 31.♙g3 ♖f8
 32.♖e2 ♖f3+! 33.♙h2 ♙f6
 No play for you!

34.♙g1 h5 35.♖e8 ♙f7
 36.♖h8 ♖h3 37.♙f1 ♙g7
 38.♖e8 ♙f3! 39.♖e7+ ♙f6
 40.♙e1 ♙xe7 41.♙d2 h4
 42.a4 ♖h1 43.♙e3 ♖g1

The h-pawn promotes whether or not Black saves the ♙, and allowing White to take it might be a good practical choice, as there would be one fewer attacking piece to cause a stalemate.

44.a5 h3 45.c5 h2

Not even getting distracted by free pawns.

46.♙d4 dxc5+ 47.♙e5 h1♖
 48.♙f4 ♖g4+ 49.♙e3 ♖e1+
 50.♙d3 ♖d4+ 51.♙c2 ♖d1+
 52.♙b2 ♖d2+ 53.♙b3 ♖b4+
 54.♙a3 ♖b2#

0-1

Tao, Ellen (1490) Botez, Andrea (1887)

B06

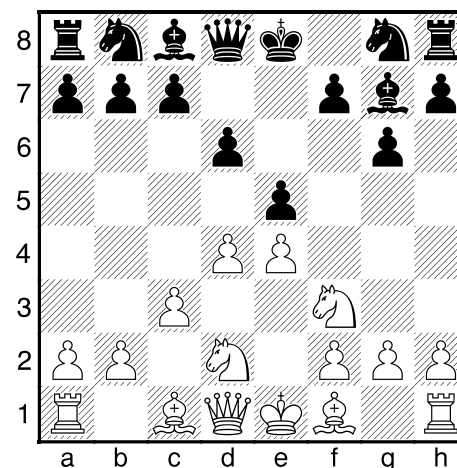
CYCC U16U18 w Sault Ste Marie
CAN (2.24), 06.07.2017

Notes: John Upper

1.e4 d6 2.d4 g6 3.♞d2 ♙g7
 4.♞gf3 e5

A rare move. More often Black transposes to a Pirc with ...♞f6.

5.c3



There are very few games in the dB from this position; in them White scores the usual 54%, but Elo +190.

5...♞c6 6.d5?!

This can't be best. White closes the center and allows Black to

transpose into a KID with a very easy and fast ...f5.

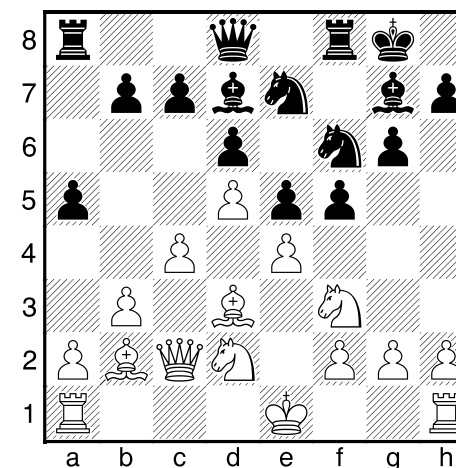
6.♙b5!? gives White options
 of trading the LSB, but even
 6.♙d3!? is OK, since the d-pawn
 doesn't hang due to ♖a4+.

6...♞ce7 7.c4 a5
 7...f5!

8.♖c2 f5 9.♙d3 ♞f6 10.b3
 0-0 11.♙b2

Not as good a diagonal as it might seem, as Black's e5 pawn now makes both ♙s bad. FWIW: teleporting White's ♞d2 to c3 would help White's position a lot, making it closer to equal.

11...♙d7



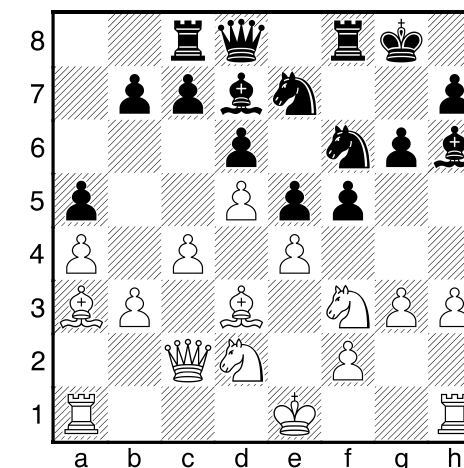
12.a4?!

...a4 wasn't a threat, since White could go b4 and prepare c4-c5. But now White can't support c4-c5 with a pawn, and Black could immediately clamp the queenside with 12 ...b6 before deciding what to do on the kingside.

12...♙h6 13.h3 ♖c8 14.♙a3
 ♞h5! 15.g3

Stops ...♞f4 but weakens the ♞f3 and h3-pawn.
15.0-0 ♞f4.

15...♞f6

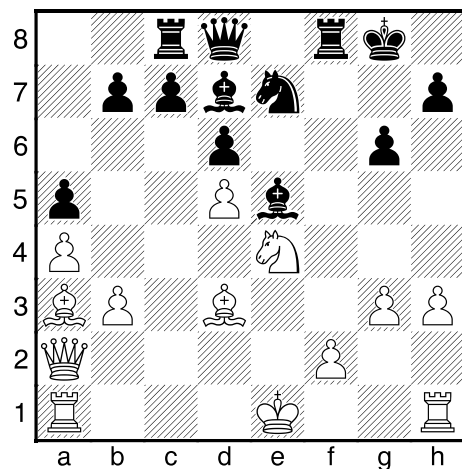


16.♖b2

16.exf5 gxf5 17.g4!↗.

16...fxe4 17.♞xe4 ♞fxd5!

18. ♖xe5! ♙g7! ♜ 19. ♔a2
♙xe5 20. cxd5



20... ♙xa1?

This "wins" the exchange, but at the cost of handing White a strong and easy-to-play initiative against the kingside dark squares.

♞20... ♙f5
21. ♖d1 ♘xd5
22. b4 c6+-.

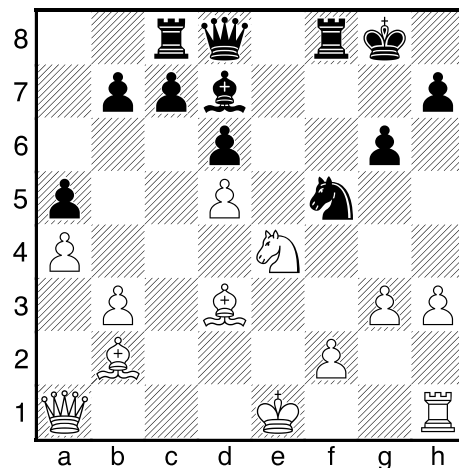
21. ♔xa1

♞f5

21... ♘xd5 guards f6, but steps into a pin after 22. ♙c4 c6 23. ♔d4 with the initiative

and a choice about when to take on d6.

22. ♙b2



22... ♖f7?!

22... c5!∞ aims to block the long

diagonal with ... ♘d4, even at the cost of a center pawn; and now:

23. dxc6 ♙xc6 and Black can eliminate one dark square attacker with ... ♙xe4; or

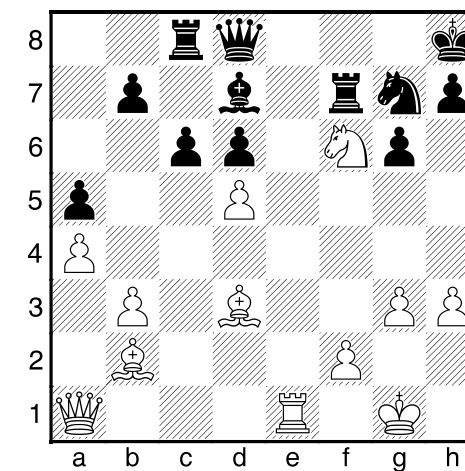
23. ♘f6+ 23... ♖xf6! 24. ♙xf6 ♔e8+ 25. ♔d2 (25. ♔f1? ♘xg3+! 26. fxg3 ♔e3-+) 25... ♖f7.

After missing this chance (22... c5) Black gets a long and (hopefully) memorable lesson in the power of an uncontested ♙ on a diagonal pointed at the ♔. I suppose White might also be getting a lesson in the same theme, although we don't usually say that about the player who is moving the pieces; but her exchange "sac" wasn't exactly voluntary, so both players may have walked into a position where neither one knew that White had very good comp for the exchange, but White just happened to be on the happy side.

23. 0-0 ♙g7 24. ♘f6+ ♔h8? Black hadn't reconciled herself to how bad her position was becoming, otherwise she might

have bailed with 24... ♖xf6±.

25. ♖e1 c6



26. ♖e4!?

26. h4!+- cracking the light squares is thematic and strong, and even stops Black from winning the h-pawn with ... ♙xh3.

26... g5?!

Stops ♖h4, but weakens the b1-h7 diagonal.
26... ♙f5 27. ♖h4 g5 28. ♙xf5 gxh4 29. ♙xc8 ♔xc8 30. g4+-.

27. ♖e1

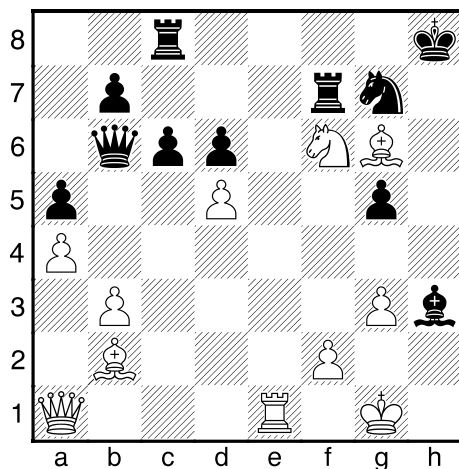
27. ♘h5! ♔f8 (27... ♙f5 28. ♘xg7 ♙xe4 29. ♘e6+-) 28. ♙xg7+ ♖xg7 29. ♘xg7 ♔xg7 30. ♔xg7+ ♔xg7 31. ♖e7+-.



U16g Champ Ellen Tao, with Roman & Andrew Peredun



27...♔b6 28.♙xh7! ♙xh3
29.♙g6!



Black's next look like panicky time-trouble moves, but even with an hour on the clock there is no saving the game.

29...♖ff8 30.♖e3 ♖xf6
31.♙xf6 ♔g8
31...♖g8 32.♙xg7+ ♖xg7
33.♖e8#.

32.♙xg7 cxd5 33.♙d4 ♔c6
34.♖c3 ♔d7 35.♖xc8+ ♔xc8
36.♔e1 ♙e6 37.♔d1 g4
38.♔d2 ♔f8 39.♔h6+ ♔e7
40.♔g7+

1-0

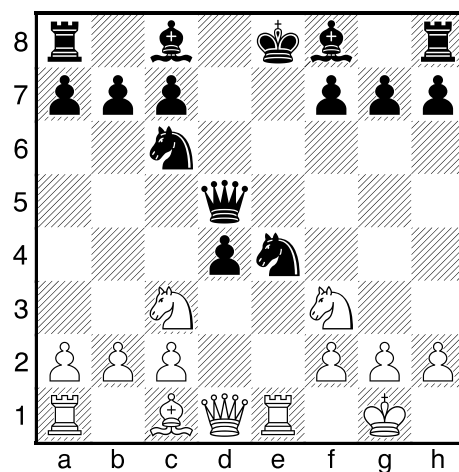
Huang, Patrick (2003) Rusonik, Max (1846)

C56

CYCC U12 Sault Ste Marie CAN
(5.54), 08.07.2017

Notes: John Upper

1.e4 e5 2.d4 exd4 3.♘f3 ♘c6
4.♙c4 ♘f6 5.0-0 ♘xe4 6.♖e1
d5 7.♙xd5 ♖xd5 8.♘c3



8...♔a5

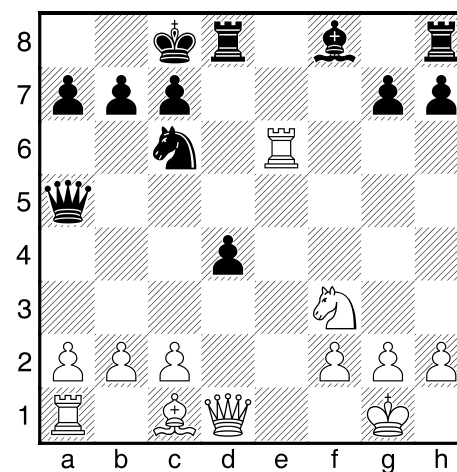
The mainline. Both 8...♔h5 and ...♔d8 are played regularly, and ...♔d7!? is rare but recommended in [Ntirlis's Playing 1.e4 e5](#) (Quality Chess, 2017).

To give an idea of how much today's players have learned from the past, here is a simul game that goes off the rails very

quickly, despite being played between by the then-reigning World Champion against a soon-to-be great:

8...♔d8 9.♘xe4 (♔9.♖xe4+)
9...♙e6?! (♔9...♙e7?) 10.c3?!
(10.♘fg5±) 10...dxc3! 11.♔b3!?
♙b4? (♔11...♔d7?) 12.♘eg5!
cxb2? 13.♘xe6?? (13.♙xb2
♙xe1 14.♖xe1 ♔d7 15.♘xf7!→
0-0 16.♘h6+!)) 13...bxa1 ♔-+
14.♘xd8+ ♙xe1 15.♘xc6 ♖xc1
and here, 16.♔e3+ would win for White, if it weren't for 16...♔xe3.
0-1 [Reti,R-Lasker,Em \(simul\)](#)
[Vienna, 1908.](#)

9.♘xe4 ♙e6 10.♘eg5 0-0-0
11.♘xe6 fxe6 12.♖xe6



There are still over 1100 games in the Megabase from here, and

Black scores over 50% with a slight Elo minus and with about 1/3 of the games being drawn, which suggests that White players go for this as a drawing line against higher-rated opponents, though that couldn't be the case here, as White was clearly much higher rated.

12...♙e7!?

A rare move, recommended in *Openings for Amateurs* by [Pete Tamburro](#) (Mongoose, 2017).

[Bologan's](#) repertorie continues:
12...h6 13.♔e2 g5 14.♔e4 ♔d5
15.♙d2 ♙g7 16.♔xd5 ♖xd5
17.♖g6 ♖h7! 18.h4 gxh4 19.♖e1
♖c5 (19...♔d7 20.♖e4 h3 (0-1,
41) Kett,T (2238)–Borisek,J
(2575) Novi Sad 2009) 20.♖c1
♖b5, Bologan.

13.♔e2

13.♘e5 ♘xe5 14.♖xe7 ♖d7
(14...♖he8 15.♙d2 (15.♖xe8
♖xe8= Tamburro) 15...♔b6
16.♖xe8 ♖xe8 17.♔h5 ♔g6
18.♔xg6 ♘xg6 19.♔f1 c5 ½-½
Leiner,R (2379)–Ghyssens,D
(2397) ICCF email, 2012.)
15.♖xd7 ♘xd7 16.♙f4 ♖e8 17.h3





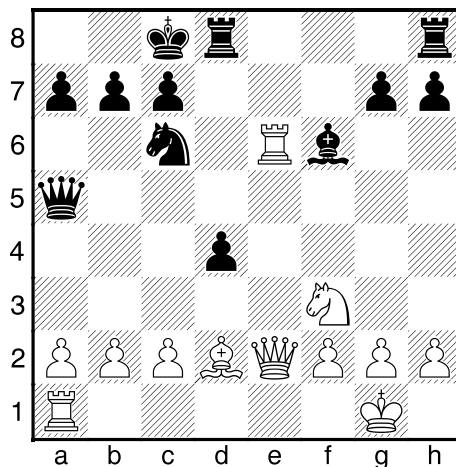
Chess Canada Embiggened

♔f5?! 18.♘g3 ♔e4 19.♔d2 b6
 20.b4 ♘f6 21.♖d1 ♔b7 22.a4
 ♔e2 23.♔xd4 ♔xc2 24.a5
 (24.♔a1!±) 24...♖e4 25.♔a1
 ♔e2 26.♖c1 ♖c4 27.axb6??
 (27.a6++- ♔c8 28.♖e1 ♔h5
 (28...♔d2 29.♔e5+-) 29.♖e7+-)
 27...axb6 28.b5 ♔b8??
 (28...♖xc1+ 29.♔xc1 ♔e7±)
 29.♖e1 ♔c2 30.♔a6 ♖e4 31.♖a1
 1-0 Tartakower,S–Tarrasch,S
 Gothenburg, 1920.

13...♙f6

This is the end of Tamburro's analysis.

14.♙d2

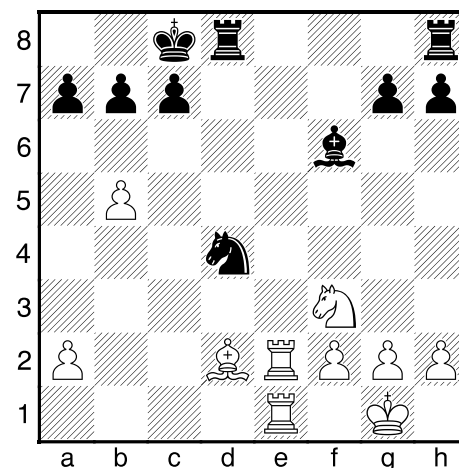


14...♔h5

14...d3!? *Leela* 15.cxd3 ♔b5
 16.♙c3 ♙xc3 17.bxc3 ♔xd3

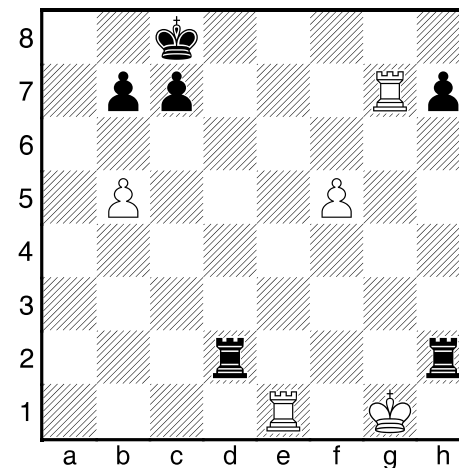
Black's structure is better.

15.♖e1 d3 16.cxd3 ♔d5
 17.b4 ♔xd3 18.b5 ♔xe2
 19.♖6xe2 ♘d4



Trading the minors produces a drawn rook ending.

20.♘xd4 ♙xd4 21.♙f4
 ♖hf8 22.g3 ♖f7 23.♙g5 ♙f6
 24.♙xf6 ♖xf6 25.♖e7 ♖d7□
 26.f4 a6 27.a4 axb5 28.axb5
 ♖b6 29.♖e8+ ♖d8 30.♖8e7
 ♖d7 31.♖e8+ ♖d8 32.♖8e7
 ♖d7 33.♖7e5 ♖d2 34.f5 g6
 35.g4 gxf5 36.gxf5 ♖h6
 37.♖e7 ♖h7 38.♖g7



It's still equal, but it's so unbalanced that it's easier to blunder than to find the only move to save the game.

38...♖he2??

38...♖hf2? 39.♖e8+ wins the
 ♖f2;
 38...b6? 39.f6 ♔b7 40.f7 ♖hf2
 41.♖f1+-;
 38...♖h6□ 39.♖ee7 ♖b6
 40.♖xh7 ♖xb5=.

39.♖xe2!+- ♖xe2 40.f6

The passer can't be stopped.

40...♔d8 41.♖g8+ ♖e8 42.f7

1-0



U10 Open

Group photo: Victoria Jung-Doknjas



Chess Canada Embiggened

The following is a well-played game between the top two U14s. As always, I ran it through the Fritz UI "blundercheck", but it found no noteworthy errors. Of course, that itself is noteworthy, but means it's more difficult to write interesting notes. Rather than leave it out, or turn it into an Opening Survey, I decided to let Fritz do all the analysis, using its "Full Analysis" feature.

This, for better or worse, is what you get with (almost) zero "expert" human input...

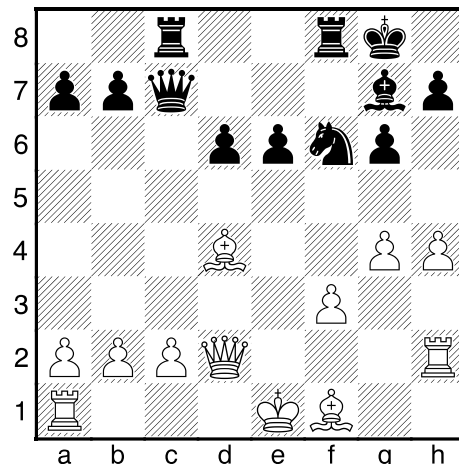
Notes: Fritz17 auto

Vettese, Nicholas (2234)
Talukdar, Rohan (2265)
CYCC U14 Sault Ste Marie CAN
(5.35), 08.07.2017

B76: Sicilian Dragon: Yugoslav Attack, 9 g4 and 9 0-0-0.

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 g6 6.♙e3 ♙g7 7.f3 0-0 8.♙d2 ♘c6 9.g4 ♘xd4 10.♙xd4 ♙e6 11.♘d5 ♙xd5 12.exd5 ♙c7 13.h4 ♙ac8 14.♙h2! e5
White is slightly better.

15.dxe6! fxe6



16.0-0-0! ♘d5 17.♙xg7

♙xg7 18.h5

18.♙e2 ♙f7 19.♙e4 ♙c6 20.♙b5 ♙b6 21.♙a4 ♘f4 22.♙b3 d5 23.♙d4 ♙c6 24.♙b1 b5 25.a4 a6 26.♙b4 ♙f6 27.h5 gxh5 28.gxh5 ♙h8 29.♙h1 ♙b6 30.h6 e5 31.♙e1 d4 32.c3 bxa4 Oll,L (2595)–Georgiev,K (2660) Biel 1993 CBM 037; Georgiev,Ki 0-1 (40);

18.♙b1 ♙c6 19.c4 ♘f4 20.♙e3 a6 21.♙hd2 ♙c7 22.g5 d5 23.♙e1 ♙b6 24.♙d4 ♙c7 25.cxd5 exd5 26.♙d2 ♙e5 27.♙e1 ♙f5+ 28.♙d3 ♘xd3 29.♙xd3 ♙xf3 30.♙xf3 ♙xf3 31.♙xd5 ♙c7 32.♙ed1 ♙f4 Kirchei,V (1869)–Borisova,E (2117) Moscow 2018 0-1 (53)



U14

Rohan Talukdar

Nicholas Vettese

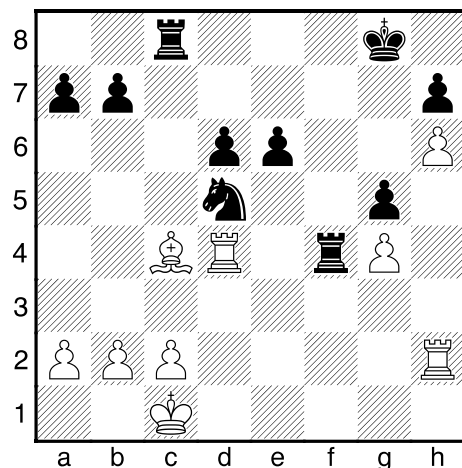


Chess Canada Embiggened

18...g5 19.h6 ♖f6 20.♔d4N
20.♔b1± ♖c6 21.c4 ♘f4 22.♔d4
a6 23.♔xf6 ♖xf6 24.b3 d5
25.♔b2 ½-½ (25) Mobarhani,N
(1871)–Asgharzadeh,M (1986)
Arak 2017

20...♔xd4
20...♖c5 with more
complications. 21.♙e2 ♔xd4
22.♖xd4 ♖f4 23.♖d3 ♔f7

21.♖xd4 ♖xf3 22.♙c4 ♖f4



23.♙xd5! exd5 24.♖xd5
♖xg4 25.♖xd6=
Endgame KRR–KRR

25...♖g1+ 26.♔d2! g4
27.♖d7 ♔h8 28.♖f2
Intending Rff7 and mate.

28...♖h1! 29.♖g2 ♖g8
30.♖xb7 ♖xh6 31.♖xa7 g3
And now ...Rh2 would win.

32.♖a4 ♖h1
Black has compensation.

33.♖a6! ♖h3 34.♖f6 h5
35.♔e2 h4
Better is 35...♖e8+ 36.♔f3 h4

36.♖f1! ♔h7 37.a4 ♖b8 38.b3
♔g6 39.a5 ♔g5 40.♖a1!
♖e8+ 41.♔f3 ♖f8+
Accuracy: White = 69%, Black
= 80%.

½-½

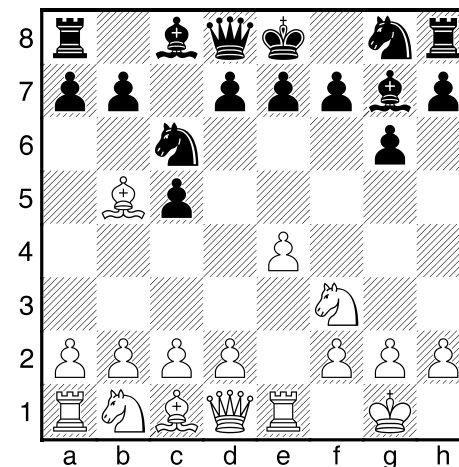
The following is the decisive
game between the top two fin-
ishers in the U16 Open.

Chen, Richard (2330)
Liang, Hairan (2185)
B31

CYCC U16 Sault Ste Marie CAN
(3.14), 07.07.2017
Notes: John Upper

U16 Richard Chen vs Hairan Liang

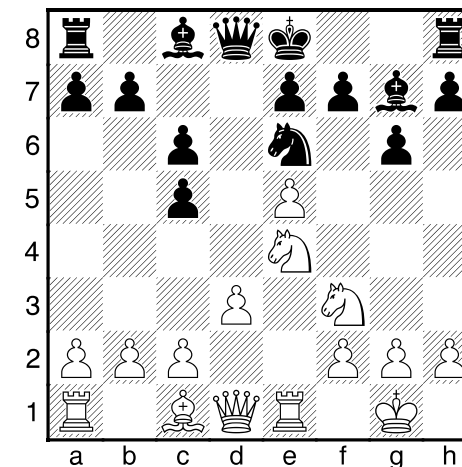
1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙b5 g6
4.0-0 ♙g7 5.♖e1



5...♘f6!?
5...e5! is what Carlsen plays
against the ♙b5 anti–Sveshnikov.

See the recent **chessable**
opening training program "Fight
Like Magnus" by the diligent and
reliable [IM Christof Sielecki](#).

6.e5 ♘d5 7.♘c3 ♘c7 8.♙xc6
dxc6 9.♘e4 ♘e6 10.d3

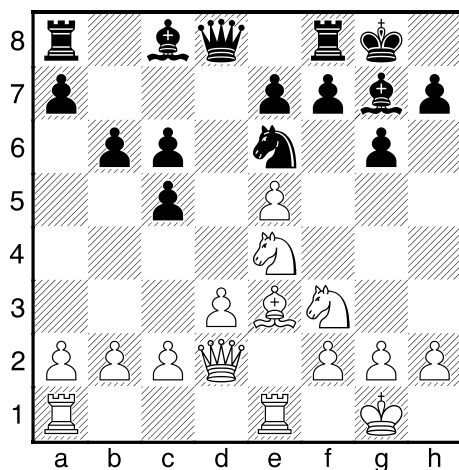


10...0-0

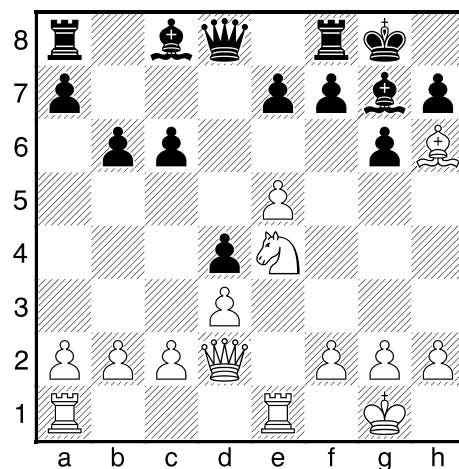
10...h6!? is a way to try to prevent the exchange of DSBs that occurs in the game. After 11.♙e3 b6 12.♚d2 Black can't castle, but the center is clogged up enough that this shouldn't be a big problem. The game might then go:

12...♘d4 13.♙xd4 cxd4 14.♚f4 threatening ♘xd4 14...c5 15.♘f6+ ♔f8∞;

12...g5!? is a provocative way to go, e.g. 13.h3 ♖g8!? 14.♘g3 ♙h8 15.b4 cxb4 16.♚xb4 ♖g6 17.a4 c5 18.♚e4 ♖b8 19.a5 ♙b7∞ (0-1, 45) Delgado Ramirez,N (2574)–Martinez Duany,L (2507) Ciego de Avila, 2010.

11.♙e3 b6 12.♚d2**12...♘d4**

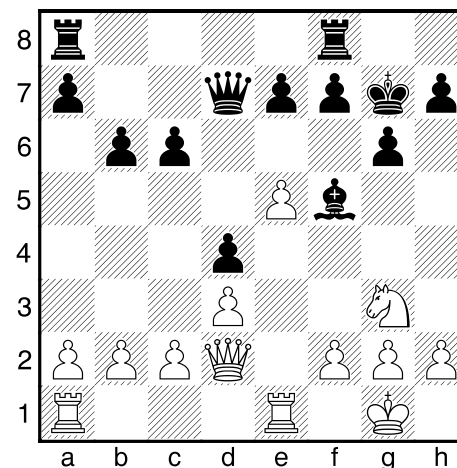
Richard Palliser awarded this a ?! in his 2007 Everyman book on the ♙b5 Anti-Sicilian, and recommended 12...f5 instead. However, after 12...f5 13.exf6 ♖exf6 White is still better and has a choice of continuations: 14.♙h6± or 14.h4±.

13.♘xd4 cxd4 14.♙h6**14...♙f5**

14...c5 15.h4 15...♚d5 16.♙xg7 ♔xg7 17.♘g3 ♙b7 18.f3 ♚e6 19.b3 ½-½ Bacrot,E (2714)–Moiseenko,A (2699) Tromsoe, 2013.

But after 14...c5, White could try 15.♖e2! preparing to double on the e–file to increase the

cramping effect of the e5-pawn (since any ...f6/f5 will hand White the open e–file). Once Black is tied down like this, White can continue with kingside space gaining pawn moves.

15.♙xg7 ♔xg7 16.♘g3 ♚d7

The next part of the game is what I liked best. Black's kingside dark squares are a bit weak, and White exploits this by bringing all his pieces to the kingside. Then, when Black is completely tied down (move 32), White's ♚ makes threats against undefended pawns in the center and queenside. Black defence against those ♚ threats leaves him unprepared for White's ♚ return to the kingside.

17.♚f4

17.♚g5 ♙e6 (17...h6? 18.♘xf5+ ♚xf5 19.♚xe7+-) 18.♖e4± or ♘h5+-f4.

17...c5 18.h4 ♚e6?!

Takes away a retreat from the ♙. ♖18...♙e6.

19.f3 ♖fd8 20.♚g5?

This is careless, and could have let Black back into the game. Better are 20.b3!? and 20.h5!?

20...♔h8?

Black misses his only chance: 20...h6! 21.♘xf5+ ♚xf5 22.♚xe7 ♖d7= and the queen is trapped, so Black gets the e–pawn back and all of White's attacking pieces are gone.

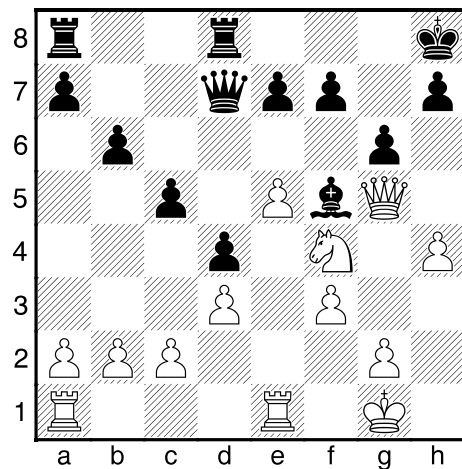
21.♘e2

Threatening g4, trapping the ♙.

21...♚d7 22.♘f4



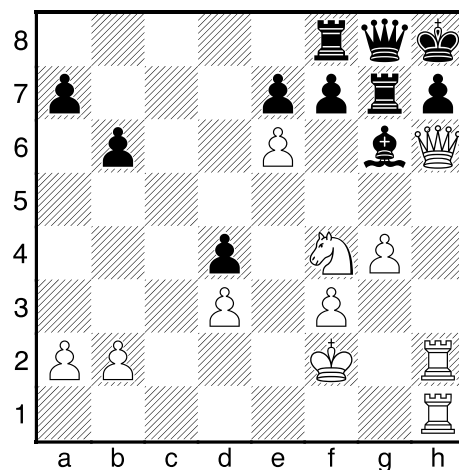
Chess Canada Embiggened



A very nice square for the ♘. Note that f4 is not technically an "outpost" -- an advanced square which cannot be attacked by an opponent's pawn -- since Black's g or e-pawns might conceivably attack the ♘f4. White's next moves eliminate those possibilities, and the ♘ stays on f4 until Black, unable to stop ♘f4-g6+-, resigns.

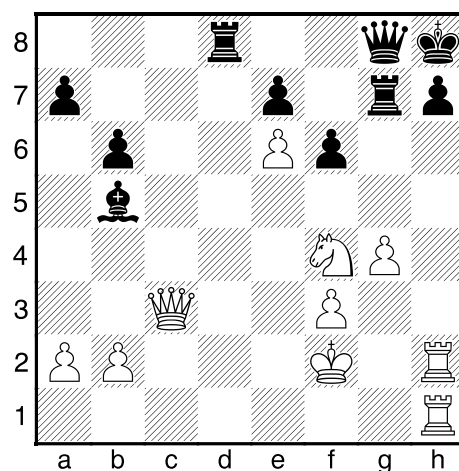
22...♙e6 23.h5 gxh5
24.♙xh5 ♖g8 25.♙f2 ♖g7
26.♖h1 ♙f5 27.g4 ♙g6
28.♙h6 c4 29.e6 ♙e8 30.♖h2
30.dxc4!

30...cxd3 31.♖ah1 ♙g8
32.cxd3 ♖f8



Black has "compact" development.
White has everything else.

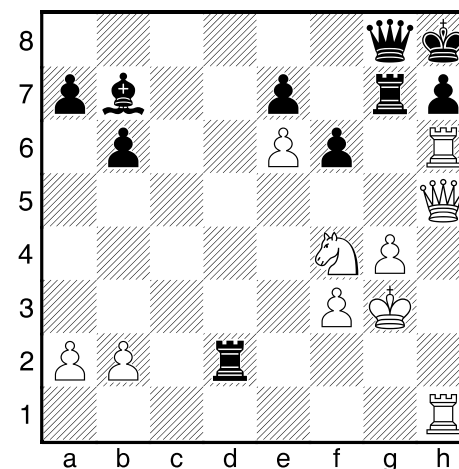
33.♙h4 ♖e8 34.♙g5 ♙xd3
35.♙e5 f6 36.♙xd4 ♖d8
37.♙c3 ♙b5



38.♙c2
♞38.♘h5 ♖g6 (38...♖g5

39.♘xf6+-) 39.♙b4+- forking b5 and e7.

38...♖d4 39.♙g3 ♙a6 40.♙f5
♙b7 41.♖h6 ♖d2 42.♙h5!



There's no good defence to ♘g6+, overloading the defenders.

Compare with the diagram at move 32: White's pieces have returned to their kingside attacking positions, while two of Black's pieces are MIA.

1-0

2017 CYCC Winners

Open

U8 Johnathan Han
U10 Kevin Zhong
U12 Patrick Huang
U14 Rohan Talukdar
U16 Richard Chen
U18 John Doknjas

Girls

U8 Lucy Gao
U10 Kate Jiang
U12 Mysha Gilani
U14 Svitlana Demchenko
U16 Ellen Tao
U18 Jiaying Wang

Two players won with perfect scores:

- Patrick Huang won the U12 Open with 7/7.
- Svitlana Demchenko won the the U14 girls with 6/6. Her section had 7 players, and so was run as a Round Robin with one bye each.

CANADIAN OPEN

The 2017 Canadian Open ran from July 8-16, 2017 in Sault Ste. Marie. 137 players competed in four sections, including 5 GMs and 7 IMs in the Masters Section.

Two Canadian's finished =1st-2nd: **GM Razvan Preotu** (+5 =3 -1) and **IM Aman Hambleton** (+4 =5 -0), with 6½/9 each. This was the first time a Canadian has won the Canadian Open since **GM Eric Hansen** won in Victoria, B.C. in 2012.

Tied for 3rd-6th, ½ point back were four GMs:

- top seed **Andrey Vovk** (UKR), lost to Hambleton in round 6 and drew with Preotu in 9;
- **Alexander Cherniaev** (RUS), &
- **James Tarjan** (USA), neither of whom were paired against either of the two winners;
- the youngest GM in the world, 15-year-old **Aryan Chopra** (IND), who drew with Preotu and Hambleton in rounds 7 and 9 respectively.

Section Winners

U2200 **Chike (Jude) Aniunoh**, 8/9

U1800 **Joey Orozco**, 7½/9

U1400 **Kate Jiang** (rated 875) 7/9

Razvan's tournament began like this...

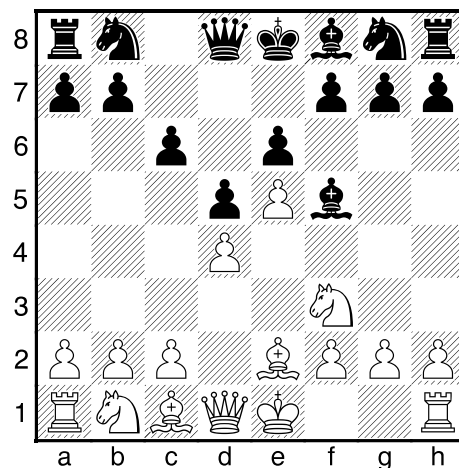
Preotu, Razvan (2633) Itkin, David (2357)

B12

*CAN-op Sault Ste Marie CAN (1),
07.07.2017*

Notes: John Upper

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 ♘f5
4.♘f3 e6 5.♙e2



The Short System.

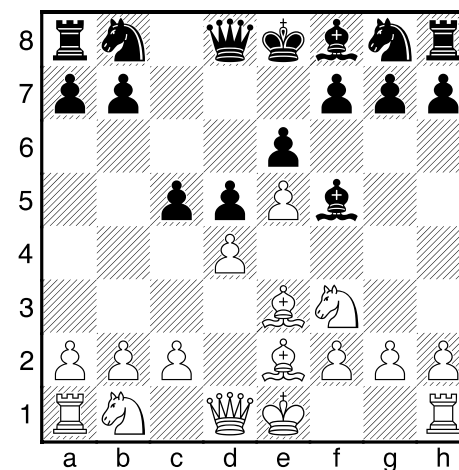
White lets Black have a French with the "bad" c8-Bishop developed on f5, and tries to

show that the ♙f5 is either a liability (as it can be attacked by g4 or ♘h4) or no asset (if White can play around it to make its pressure on the h7-b1 diagonal irrelevant).

5...c5

5...♘d7 is the second most popular move, when Black continues with ...♘e7 or ...h6, making sure Black has minor pieces ready before breaking with ...c5.

6.♙e3

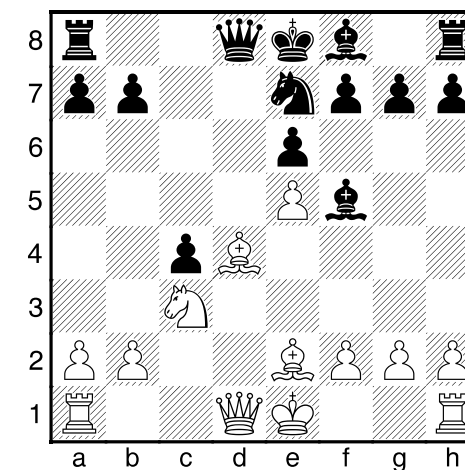


6...cxd4

6...♙b6 leads to poisoned-pawn complications after 7.♘c3 ♙xb2!? (7...♘c6±) 8.♘b5 (8.♙b1!?) 8...c4!? (8...♘a6 9.dxc5±) 9.♙b1 ♙xa2 10.♘c7+

♙d8 11.♘xa8 ♙xc2 12.♙xb7!? ♙xd1 13.♙xb8+ ♙d7 14.♙xd1 ♘e7 15.0-0 h6 16.♙d2! (½-½, 44) **Areshchenko,A (2702)–Jobava,B (2734)** Burgas, 2012.

7.♘xd4 ♘e7 8.c4 ♘bc6
9.♘c3 ♘xd4 10.♙xd4 dxc4



11.♙xc4

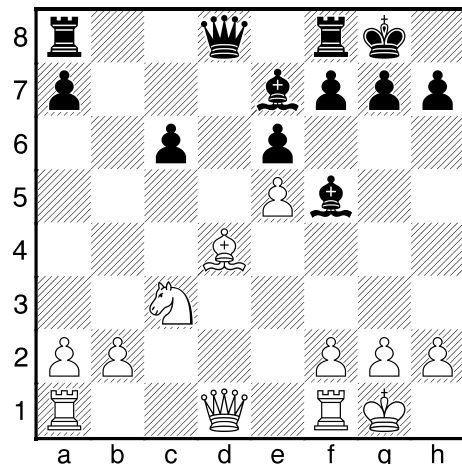
11.♙a4+!? ♘c6 12.0-0-0!? is very provocative but may be worth investigating, since the game line leads to a small but very comfortable plus for Black.

11...♘c6 12.♙b5 ♙e7 13.0-0-0

Joe Gallagher says that here "Black probably has an edge as he has the more effective minor pieces", (*Starting Out: The Caro–Kann*, Everyman 2011).

Today's computers agree, rating it =/+ after White's next...

14.♔xc6 bxc6 ♖



Structurally, Black is worse, with an isolated pawn on a half-open file; but White doesn't have time to blockade and attack the c-file iso before it moves to c4 where it can support his ♔ on d3 *and* restrict White's b2-pawn. Meanwhile, White's problems (his DSB and e5-pawn are doing double-duty, and he has no LSB) are long-term.

In addition to the game, here are three *other* tries for White, none of which change this evaluation.

15.f4

15.♖a4?! c5 16.♔e3 ♖b8!

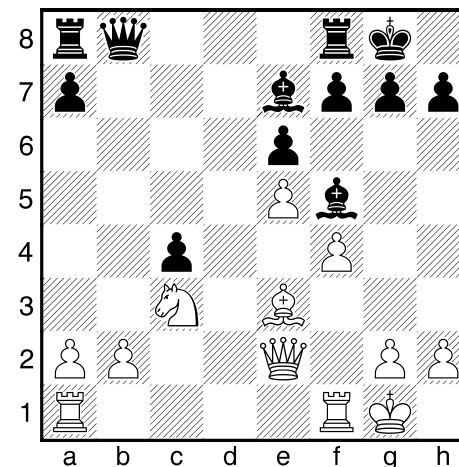
17.♔d7 ♖e8 18.♔d5?! ♔f8!
19.♖ad1 (19.♔c7?? ♖e7-+) 19...
exd5 20.♖xf5 d4 21.♔c1 ♖xe5+
(0-1, 52) **Naiditsch,A (2697)–**
Anand,V (2788) Mainz (rapid),
2009.

15.♖c1 ♖b8 16.♔e2 c5 17.♔c3
♖d8 18.♖a4 ♔d3 19.♖fe1 ♖b5
20.♖xb5 ♔xb5 21.♔a5 ♖dc8
22.♔c3 ♔d3 23.♔e4 c4 24.♖e3
♖cb8 25.♔c3 a5 26.g3 a4+ (½-
½, 41) **MacKinnon,K (2140)–**
Gerzhoy,L (2471) Canadian
Open, Toronto, 2010.

15.♔a4N looks natural, hoping
for ♔c5 and a trade of the
DSBs, but Black
keeps a plus
after: 15...♖a5
16.b3 ♖fd8
17.♔c3 ♖xd1
(17...♖a6!?)
18.♔xa5 ♖d5
19.♔c3 ♖ad8
20.♖ac1 ♔a3+.

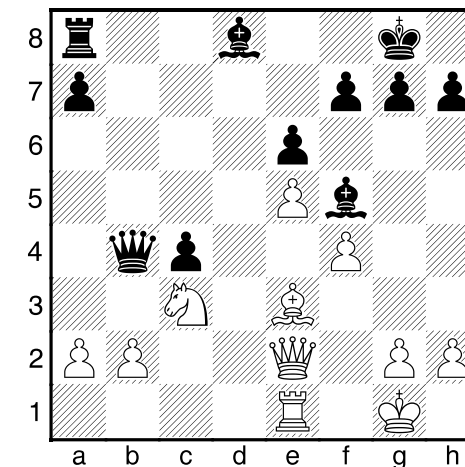
15...c5 16.♔e3
♖b8
16...♖b8.

17.♖e2 c4!



Black would be happy to
trade the c-file iso for the
♔-supporting b2-pawn, and
if White doesn't take on c4, it
will keep the b2-pawn under
pressure (as in the Gerzhoy
game quoted above).

18.♖fe1 ♖d8 19.♖ad1 ♖b4
20.♖xd8+ ♔xd8



Black is better: he has the
♔-pair, pressure on the b-file,
and can support this c4-iso with
♔d3.

21.♖d1 ♔d3 22.♖f3 ♖c8
23.♖d2 ♖b8 24.♖d1 ♔a5
25.♖a4 ♔b6 26.♔f2 ♔xf2+
27.♖xf2 ♖b6 28.♖d7 ♖f8

I don't understand this move:
f7 doesn't need defending, and
both ...♖d8 and ...♖b8 make
more sense. Maybe it was a
transcription error?

29.g3 ♖d8 30.♖e7 ♔f5
31.♔g2 ♖c6+ 32.♔g1 ♖b6
33.♔g2



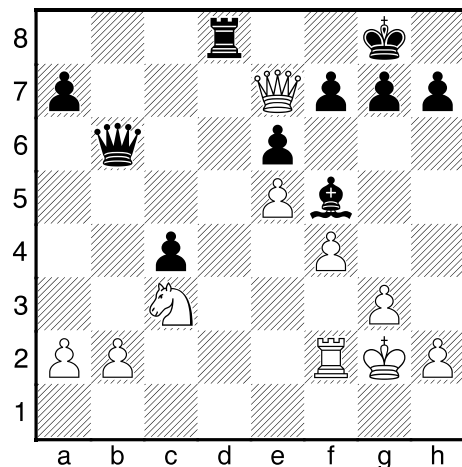
Pereudun Clan

Andrew, Roman, Daphne.





Chess Canada Embiggened



White indicates that he might be OK with a draw...

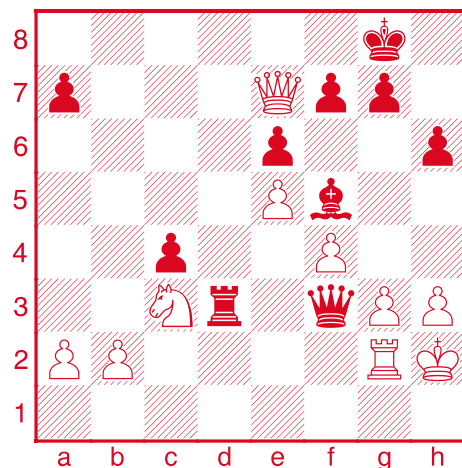
33...h6!

...and Black declines!

34.h3 ♖d3 35.♖e2

35.♖e8+ ♔h7 36.♖xf7 ♕xh3+!-+.

**35...♖c6+ 36.♔h2 ♖f3
37.♖g2**



Black's pieces surround White's ♔, all he needs is a move that makes the house of cards collapse.

37...♔h7!!

Spending a tempo (and seemingly giving up a pawn) to prevent a back-rank check and so depriving White of his only defence!

37...♕xh3? doesn't win when the White ♖ can get back to h4: 38.♔xh3 g5! (38...♖h5+?? 39.♖h4+- a variation which shows why the white ♖ has to be able to move to h4.) 39.♔h2 ♖h5+ 40.♔g1 ♖d1+ and Black can force a perpetual.

37...♖xc3? doesn't work where there's a back rank check: 38.bxc3 ♕e4 39.♖d8+ ♔h7 40.♖d2± Exchanges on g2 leave White's ♔ in charge in a winning ♔♖ ending. This variation shows that the white ♖ has to be able to get back to defend g2/h1.

Seeing that the white ♖ has two jobs is a key to spotting that ...♔h7 is such a good move.

38.g4

38.♖xa7 ♕xh3!-+;

38.♖xf7 ♖xc3 39.bxc3 ♕e4-+ and there's no stopping mate on g2 or h1.

38...♖xf4+ 39.♔g1 ♕e4

David Itkin played very well and deservedly scored the big upset of round 1.

0-1

The next game is strange. IM (now GM) **Kaiqi Yang** seems to play for a draw as of move 4, his higher-rated GM opponent keeps taking risks to unbalance the position, and eventually reaches a winning endgame, which he plays excellently... until he loses in a drawn position!

**Yang, Kaiqi (2415)
Lenderman, Aleksandr
(2585)**

C03

CAN-op Sault Ste Marie CAN

(3.2), 10.07.2017

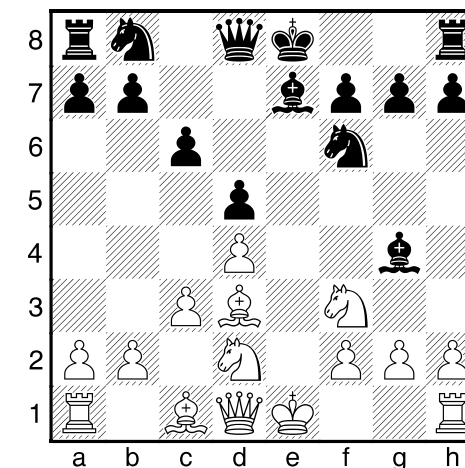
Notes: John Upper

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘d2 ♕e7

4.exd5 exd5

An exchange French. White is equal, and Black will have difficulty creating imbalances sufficient to trouble a competent opponent.

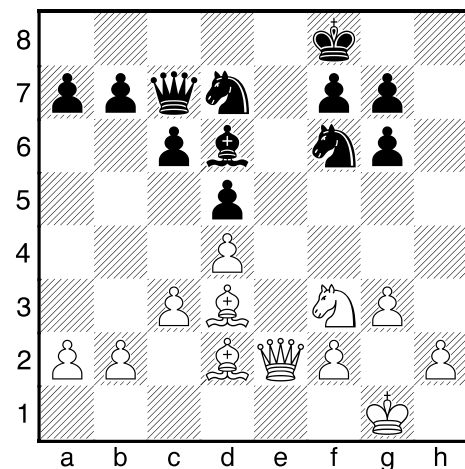
**5.♕d3 ♘f6 6.♘gf3 ♕g4 7.c3
c6**



8.♖b3

Although these symmetrical positions can be a strategic snooze-fest, there's always the chance for a tactical surprise: 8.♖c2 ♕h5 9.♘e5 ♕g6 10.0-0 ♘bd7 11.♖e1 0-0 (11...♕xd3) 12.♘xg6 hxg6 13.♘f3 ♕d6 14.♕g5 ♖c7 15.♖e2 ♖fe8 16.♖ae1 ♖xe2 17.♖xe2 ♖e8 18.g3 ♖xe2 19.♖xe2 ♔f8 20.♕d2

Analysis Diagram:



20...♔a5?? Black's first semi-ambitious move, and it turns out to be a blunder because it leaves the ♕d6 undefended!

The game continued 21.a3 ♔b6 22.♕c1 (♖22.♘g5! ♔xb2 23.♕xg6±) 22...♔c7 23.♘g5! c5 24.♕xg6! cxd4 25.♕xf7 d3 26.♔xd3 ♘e5 27.♔f5 ♔c6 28.♕h5 ♔a6 29.♕f4 ♘c4 30.♔e6 (1-0, 30) Bojkovic,N (2400)–Matveeva,S (2496) Elista, 2004.

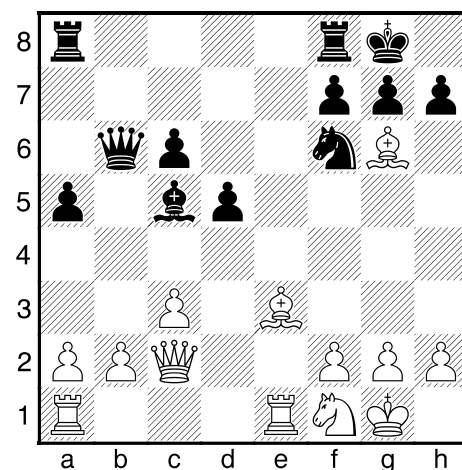
Instead, 21.♕xg6!! would have been crushing, but who looks for shots like this from such a boring position? 32...fxg6 22.♔e6 gaining a tempo on the ♕ to bring the ♘ in for mate; e.g. 22...♔c7 (22...♕e7 23.♘g5+-)

23.♘h4+-.

8...♔c7 9.♘e5 ♕h5 10.0-0 0-0 11.♔e1 c5

Black plays to break the symmetry.

12.♔a4 ♘c6 13.♘f1 ♕d6 14.♘xc6 bxc6 15.dxc5 ♕xc5 16.♕f4 ♔b6 17.♔c2 a5 18.♕e3 ♕g6 19.♕xg6



19...fxg6!?

Activating the ♖ but exposing the ♔ a little more — Black keeps trying to unbalance.

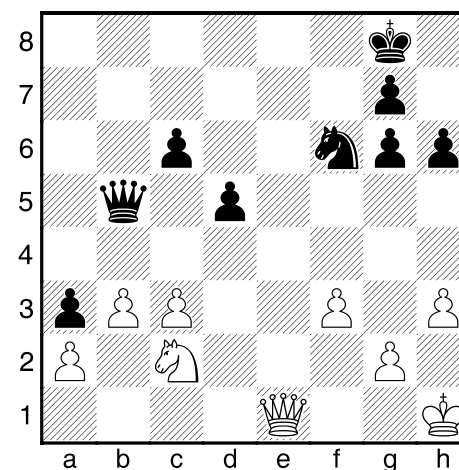
20.f3 a4 21.♕xc5 ♔xc5+ 22.♔h1

22.♔f2 ♔xf2+ 23.♔xf2 a3 24.b3 ♘e4+.

22...a3 23.b3 ♖ae8 24.♔d2

♔b5 25.♘e3 ♖e5 26.♘c2 ♖fe8 27.♖xe5 ♖xe5 28.♖e1 h6 29.h3 29.♖xe5?? ♔f1#.

29...♖xe1+ 30.♔xe1

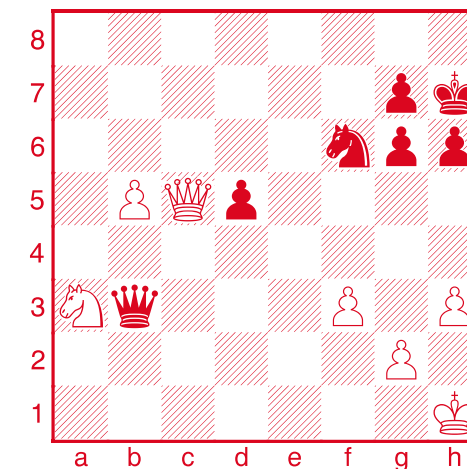


30...c5

30...♔d3 31.♘xa3 ♔h7=; 30...♔a5 31.♔e6+ ♔h7 32.♔xc6 d4 33.♘xd4 ♔g5 34.♔c7 ♔c1+ 35.♔h2 ♘d5=.

31.♘xa3 ♔a6 32.♔c1 ♔e2 33.b4 cxb4 34.cxb4 ♔xa2 34...♘h5!? leaves White with two passed pawns, but Black has sufficient play against the loose kingside.

35.b5 ♔b3 36.♔c5 ♔h7



Material is equal. Both sides have passed pawns, White's is further advanced but Black's ♔ is well-placed behind it and White's ♘a3 is not well placed. Finally, Black's earlier ...fxg6 capture has left his ♔ better protected from ♔ checks than White's ♔.

37.♔d6?

This makes sense on general principles — it gets ready to advance the b-pawn while defending the ♘ and staying behind Black's passer — but it loses to the very precise sequence which Black plays.

♖37.♔h2;

37.b6?! isn't as losing as it looks 37...♘d7 38.♔b5 ♔xb5 39.♘xb5 ♘xb6 40.f4!.

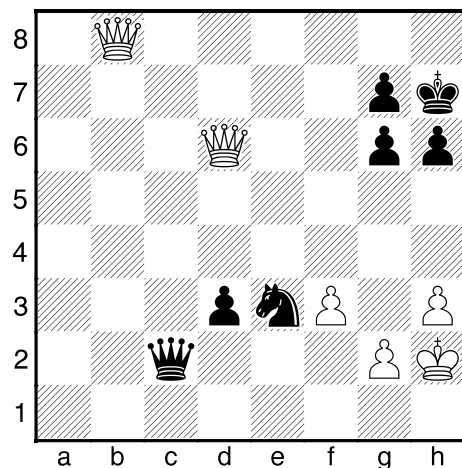


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**37...d4!-+ 38.b6 ♖d5!
39.♔h2 d3! 40.♖c4 ♕xc4
41.b7**

White is going to promote (first), but Black aims at a more important target.

41...♞e3! 42.b8♞ ♕c2□



White has to give up a ♕ to stop the mate on g2, after which the d-pawn should win.

43.♕xg6+!

43.♔g3 ♞f5+-+;

43.♕g3 ♞f1+-+.

43...♔xg6 44.♕e8+ ♔f6

45.♕f8+ ♔e6

45...♔e5 46.♕xg7+ ♔d5-+.

46.♕e8+ ♔d6 47.♕d8+

47.♕xe3 d2 48.♕b6+ ♔e7-+

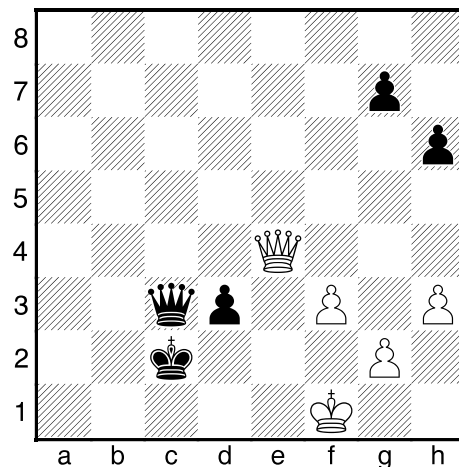
Black zigzags back to h7 when there will be no perpetual because the black ♕ defends the diagonal.

47...♔c5 48.♕e7+ ♔c4

49.♕e4+ ♔b3 50.♕xe3 ♕c7+

51.♔g1 ♔c2 52.♕e4 ♕c3

53.♔f1



Black has shown great resourcefulness to create imbalances and accuracy to turn them into a winning position... but now he starts to drift. No doubt time trouble was a factor.

53...g5

Unnecessary. 53...♔c1!

54.h4! ♔b2 55.hxg5 hxg5

56.♕d5 ♔c2

♞56...♕c1+ 57.♔f2 ♕c2+

58.♔g3 d2-+;

♞56...d2 57.♔e2 ♔c1-+.

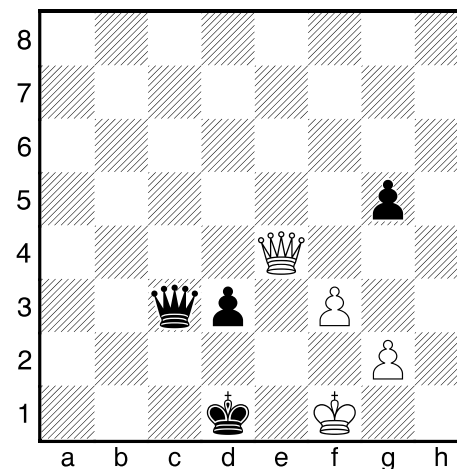
57.♕f5 ♕c4

57...♔c1 58.♕xg5+ d2 59.♔f2

♕d4+ 60.♔e2 ♕c4+ 61.♔f2

♔d1-+.

**58.♔e1 ♕c3+ 59.♔f1 ♔d1?!
60.♕e4!**



60...d2?? 61.♕b1+ ♕c1

62.♕a2!=

Black will have to move his ♕, and White will repeat with a check on the first rank.... but somehow this game ended as a win for White? It must have been a flag.... and that's why nobody plays the French (if you listen to the guys on chess.com).

1-0

**Hambleton, Aman (2522)
Vovk, Andrey (2630)**

B70

CAN-op Sault Ste Marie CAN

(6.2), 13.07.2017

Notes: John Upper

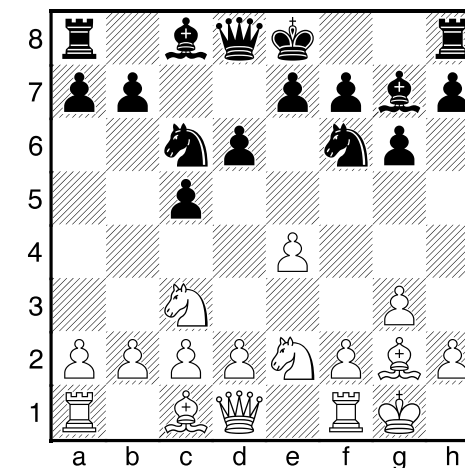
1.e4 c5 2.♞e2

This Chameleon-like move was often played by Paul Keres. White keeps options of playing an open Sicilian with d4 or closed with d3, and so can choose which Sicilian lines to avoid.

2...♞c6 3.♞bc3 ♞f6 4.g3

White's decided there will be no Najdorf or Sveshnikov.

4...d6 5.♞g2 g6 6.0-0 ♞g7





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7.d4!?

Were you expecting a Closed with d2-d3? If so, you haven't been watching Canadian chess since the 1980s. True, this *is* a Canadian playing White in the Canadian Open; but Aman is one of the many Canadians in the post-Suttles and post-Day era who play the Open Sicilian as White.

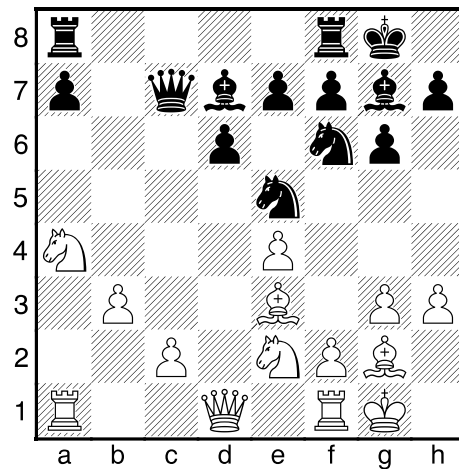
7...cxd4 8.♘xd4 ♕d7

8...♕g4 9.♘de2 ♖c8 10.f3 ♕h3
11.♕xh3 ♖xh3 12.♕g5 0-0
13.♖d2 h6 14.♕e3 ♗h7 15.♖ac1
♖d7 16.♘d5 ♘xd5 17.exd5 ♘e5
18.b3 b5 19.♕d4± ♖ac8 20.f4
♘g4 21.♕xg7 ♗xg7 22.♘d4 ♘f6
23.c4 bxc4 24.bxc4 e6 25.dxe6
fxe6 26.♖fe1 ♖fe8 27.♘b3 a6
28.♖d4 ♖c6 29.♖ed1 e5!=
30.fxe5 ♖xe5 31.♖xe5 dxe5
32.♖xd7+ ♘xd7 33.♖d1 ♘f6
34.c5 ♗f7 35.♖c1 ♘d7 36.♗f2
♗e6 37.♗e3 ♗d5 38.♖d1+ ♗e6
39.♖c1 ♗d5 (½-½, 39) **Spassky-Fischer**, Belgrade, 1992.

9.♘de2 0-0 10.h3 ♘e5 11.a4
♖a5 12.b3 b5?! 13.♕e3!

Defending the ♖a1, and so threatening axb5+.

13...bxa4 14.♘xa4 ♖c7



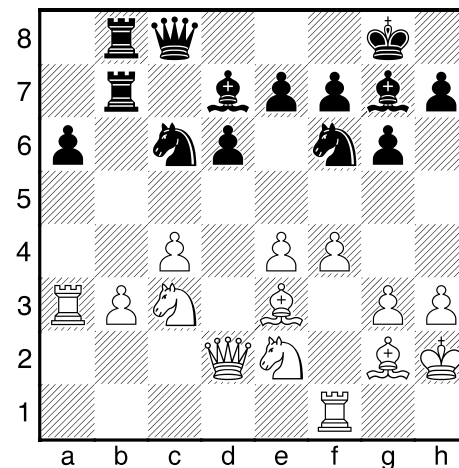
15.c4

This gives Black a target on b3, but it's still good.

15.♖d2? steps into a fork on f3 15...♕xh3!± but you still have to see the rest: 16.f4 ♕xg2 17.fxe5 ♘xe4□-+.

15.f4!? aiming to dislodge the ♘s with an eventual g3-g4-g5 also deserves consideration.

15...♖fb8 16.♖a3 ♘c6
17.♘ac3 a6 18.♖d2
♖c8 19.♗h2 ♖b7
20.f4 ♖ab8



21.♖d1

I think this is an interestingly provocative way of defending

the b3-pawn. In part because it uncoordinates White's pieces a little (the ♕e3 is undefended) but also because it sends a message to Black that White may be perfectly happy playing this position VERY SLOWLY.

21.♖c2 would be the most natural way to defend b3. My hunch is that White preferred ♖d1 since the ♖c2 could be attacked after some sequence involving ...e5 and ...♘d4.

21.♘c1 would be even more provocative, but not necessarily bad.

21.♖b1 is a natural way to defend b3, but Black gets active after 21...♘b4 22.♘d4 e5!?∞.

21...♕g4!

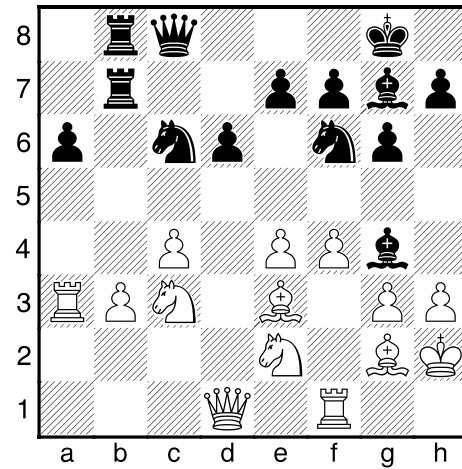


Helping the Needy

Half the winner's prize went to this unidentified but well-coiffed hobo.



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Black responds like a GM! Clever and strong. This doesn't actually threaten anything, but it annoys by tying White down.

22.f5

22.hxg4? ♘xg4+ 23.♔g1 ♘xe3+;

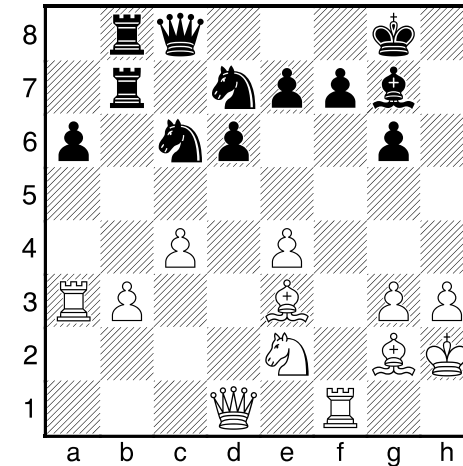
22.♖f2 e5!∞ a typical Dragon counter strike in the center, giving Black lots of play:

23.♙xd6?? gets the ♙ trapped after 23...♖d7 24.♙c5 ♙f8-+; 23.f5?! ♘d4♞ and White can't take on d4 because after 24.♙xd4? exd4 25.♙xd4 ♙xe2-+ White can't recapture on e2 without losing his ♙ to ...♘g4+.

23.fxe5 23...♘xe5 24.♙xd6 ♙e6 threatening both ...♘fg4+

and ...♖xb3.

22...♙xe2 23.♘xe2 ♘d7
24.fxg6 hxg6♞



By trading his f-pawn for Black's h-pawn, White has conceded the e5 square to Black, which gives him a comfortable Dragon-type structure.

25.e5!

Clearing the diagonal to activate the ♙g2.

25.♖xa6?? doesn't work yet, since 25...♖xb3-+ threatens the ♖a6 and ♙e3.

25...♘dxe5

25...♙xe5?! 26.♖xa6± with a tempo on the ♘c6.

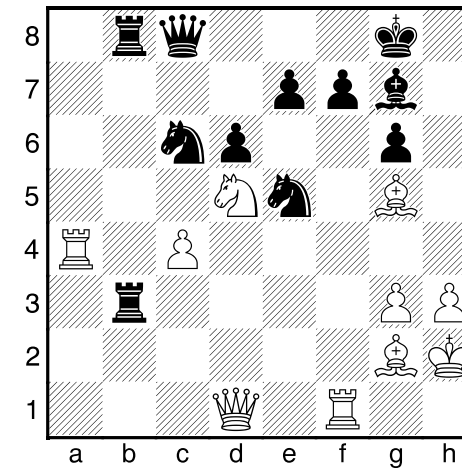
26.♘f4?

△26.♘c3♞.

26...a5 27.♘d5 a4!♞

Just a minority attack, but now Black's Rooks are very strong.

28.♖xa4 ♖xb3 29.♙g5



29...♙f8

29...♖b1! is probably winning for Black:

a) 30.♙e2 ♖b2-+;

b) 30.♙xb1 is the obvious reply, but it doesn't work since after 30...♖xb1 31.♖xb1 ♙f5-+ Black's ♙ forks g5 and b1. 32.♖b8+ (hoping to deflect the ♘c6 and fork Black on e7) 32...♔h7□ and White is hanging on b8 and g5, 33.♘xe7 forking g5 and c6,

(33.♙xe7 ♘xb8-+) 33...♘xe7
34.♙xe7 ♙d7-+ forking e7 and a4.

c) 30.♙c1! is the computer's choice: 30...♙h6 31.♘f4 ♖b4 32.♖xb4 ♘xb4-+ Black is up a pawn and his pieces are swarming into the weak areas behind the squares White's pawns used to protect.

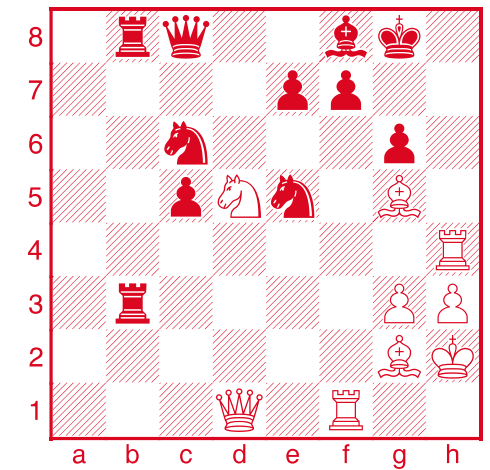
30.c5!?

Trying to make the most of the ♖a4.

30...dxc5?

△30...♖b1!

31.♖h4



What happens after 31...♖b1?



31...♖d3

31...♖b1 doesn't win for Black anymore, but the refutation is not at all obvious: 32.♙f6 threatening mate on h8 (32.♚a4? ♖xf1 33.♙xf1 ♘f3+-+.) 32...♙g7 (32...♖xd1?? 33.♖h8#; 32...exf6?? 33.♘xf6+ ♔g7 34.♖h7#) 33.♙xg7 ♖xd1 34.♘f6+ ♔xg7 (34...exf6 35.♙xf6 and there's no defence to ♖h8#.) 35.♖h7+ ♔f8 36.♖h8+ ♔g7 37.♖h7+♔=.

32.♚c1

32.♙f6 draws, as in the variations above after 31...♖b1.

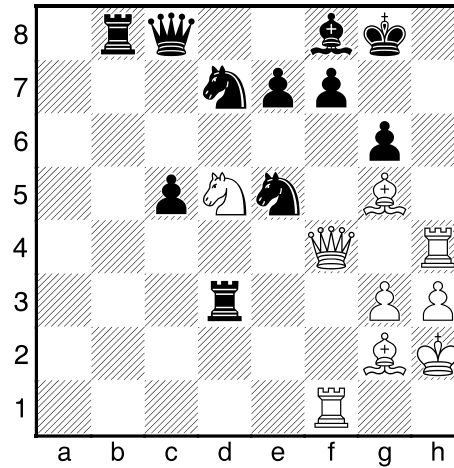
32...♘d7?

32...♖d4! to trade the ♖h4 while also defending the 4th rank and keeping the ♘e5 where it defends f7.

33.♚f4!+- ♘ce5

check

Razvan Preotu gets the winner's check from Andrew and Roman Peredun.



34.♘xe7+?

Another mistake in a head-spinning position.

34.♙xe7!? ♖xd5! 35.♙xd5±;

34.♙f6♔+- this wins, but only if you see the Shirov-quality follow

up: 34...♘xf6 35.♚xf6♔ would be a wonderful move to play against anyone, but especially so against a 2600+ GM: 35...♙g7 36.♘xe7+ ♔f8 37.♘xg6+ (37.♖h8+ also forces mate.) 37...♔g8 (37...♘xg6 38.♚xf7#) 38.♖h8+! ♙xh8 39.♚xh8#.

34...♙xe7 35.♙xe7 ♖b2?

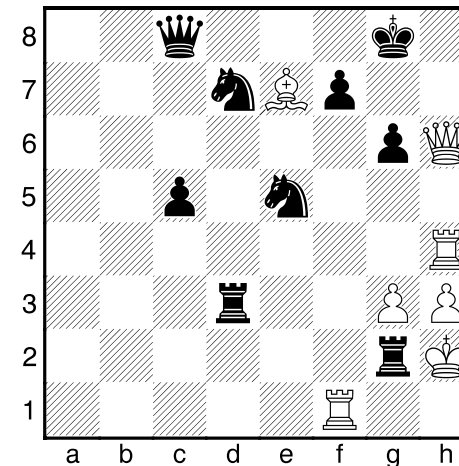
This creates some terrific threats for Black, but if White can walk a tightrope of only moves he'll end up with a winning position.

35...♖d4!±.

36.♚h6♔+-

From here on, White plays perfectly.

36...♖xg2+



37.♔h1♔

37.♔xg2? ♚a8+♔ 38.♔h2 ♚a2+♔ 39.♔h1 ♚d5+♔ 40.♔h2 ♖d2+-+.

37...♖g1+ 38.♔xg1♔

38.♖xg1? ♚b7+ 39.♔h2 ♘f3+-+.

38...♖xg3+ 39.♔h2 ♖xh3+ 40.♔xh3♔

40.♖xh3?? ♘g4+-+.

40...♘f6+ 41.♔g2 ♘h5 42.♙f6!

42.♖xh5?? ♚g4+=.

42...♚c6+ 43.♔g1! ♘f3+ 44.♖xf3♔

1-0

With this win, Aman moved to a 3-way tie for second with IM Kaiqi Yang and GM Aryan Chopra, ½ a point behind Razvan.

Aman beat Kaiqi in the next round, and then drew his last two; while Razvan drew his last three games to finish joint first.

Canadian Open

#	Name	Old	Perf	Rd.1	Rd.2	Rd.3	Rd.4	Rd.5	Rd.6	Rd.7	Rd.8	Rd.9	Total
1	Hambleton, Aman	2522	2608	+30	=9	=13	=8	+18	+3	+7	=2	=4	6.5
2	Preotu, Razvan	2633	2564	-17	+28	+16	+13	+15	+7	=4	=1	=3	6.5
3	Vovk, Andriy	2630	2603	+16	+11	=5	=12	=4	-1	+18	+7	=2	6.0
4	Chopra, Aryan	2491	2596	=24	+21	+6	=7	=3	+14	=2	=5	=1	6.0
5	Cherniaev, Alexander	2445	2549	+23	+8	=3	-14	=9	+10	+11	=4	=6	6.0
6	Tarjan, James E.	2436	2523	=20	+18	-4	+24	=8	=13	+15	+12	=5	6.0
7	Yang, Kaiqi	2503	2547	+28	+17	+12	=4	+14	-2	-1	-3	+13	5.5
8	Perez, Rodney Oscar	2430	2486	+27	-5	+23	=1	=6	=15	=12	+14	=11	5.5
9	Cummings, David	2408	2464	+26	=1	-14	+19	=5	=12	=16	+20	=10	5.5
10	Shi, Diwen	2267	2385	=0	+25	=0	-15	+16	-5	+23	+19	=9	5.5
11	Mulyar, Michael	2418	2429	+22	-3	=19	+21	=12	+17	-5	=13	=8	5.0
12	Lenderman, Alex	2654	2418	+19	+15	-7	=3	=11	=9	=8	-6	=16	4.5
13	Plotkin, Victor	2369	2395	=25	+24	=1	-2	+22	=6	=14	=11	-7	4.5
14	Samsonkin, Artiom	2559	2386	=18	+20	+9	+5	-7	-4	=13	-8	=17	4.5
15	Ragnarsson, Dagur	2355	2375	+29	-12	+17	+10	-2	=8	-6	=16	=18	4.5
16	Hua, Eugene	2343	2364	-3	+22	-2	+26	-10	+29	=9	=15	=12	4.5
17	Itkin, David	2357	2360	+2	-7	-15	+27	+19	-11	-20	+22	=14	4.5
18	Henry, Liam	2215	2295	=14	-6	+25	+28	-1	+21	-3	=23	=15	4.5
19	Dougherty, Michael	2236	2287	-12	+29	=11	-9	-17	+24	+21	-10	+25	4.5
20	Sundar, Avinaash	2256	2255	=6	-14	-21	+25	+26	=22	+17	-9	=23	4.5
21	Shen, Christopher	2146	2237	=0	-4	+20	-11	+24	-18	-19	+27	+28	4.5
22	Mills, Morgon	2193	2165	-11	-16	+30	+23	-13	=20	=27	-17	+0	4.0
23	Munro, Allan	2104	2155	-5	+27	-8	-22	+28	+25	-10	=18	=20	4.0
24	Barron, Michael	2292	2122	=4	-13	+26	-6	-21	-19	-25	+29	+27	3.5
25	Fradkin, Benjamin	2001	2055	=13	-10	-18	-20	+0	-23	+24	+28	-19	3.5
26	Wiebe, Daniel	2090	2122	-9	+30	-24	-16	-20	+0	+29	-0	-0	3.0
27	Zhang, Henry	2083	1934	-8	-23	+0	-17	-29	+28	=22	-21	-24	2.5
28	Chakkoli, Shiva	1904	1916	-7	-2	+29	-18	-23	-27	+0	-25	-21	2.0
29	Doubleday, William G.	2042	1900	-15	-19	-28	+0	+27	-16	-26	-24	-0	2.0
30	Kiviaho, Robert	2191	1868	-1	-26	-22	-0	-0	-0	-0	-0	-0	0.0

links

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cfc facebook

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photos

Victoria Jung-Doknjas
ssmchess facebook



crew

IA Aris Marghettis; TD IA Hal Bond;
Organizers: Roman Peredun & FM Andrew Peredun.



Chess Canada
Embiggened



When David Cummings's book *The English* came out, I decided to review it.

The typical chess book review is a thin description of the table of contents. Rather than that, I decided I would try to **learn and play the repertoire in all my games**, and then report on how it went.

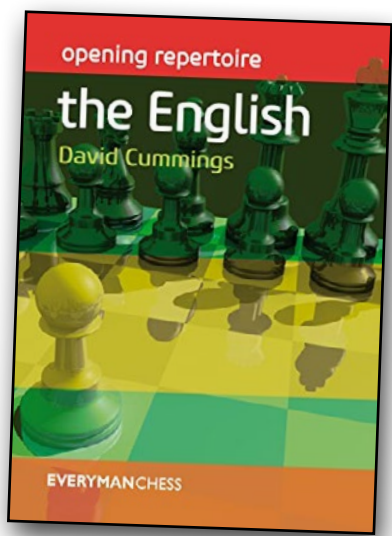
I didn't think it would take so long, but I guess I am a slow learner.

The following Overview and 14 annotated games are my book review. I play White in all of them.

For anyone still reading...

A few are online blitz games where the quality is predictably terrible. The rest are between players ranging from 1950+ CFC to GM level.

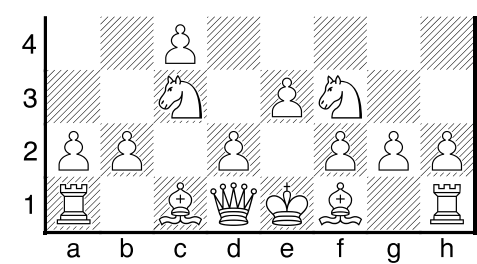
Of course, the quality of play is (on average) significantly lower than what's normally



shown in opening books — no 2700 vs 2700 battles here! But it *may* be that the types of mistakes seen here are a more useful test of the DC REP for Club level players than the games of Giri and Grischuk.

Overview

The English typically aims for the following setup as White:



Variations and continuations depend on Black's moves, three of which I will mention in the intro:

- A) 1... e5
- B) ... d5
- C) 1... c5

A) King's English: 1...e5

1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♘f6

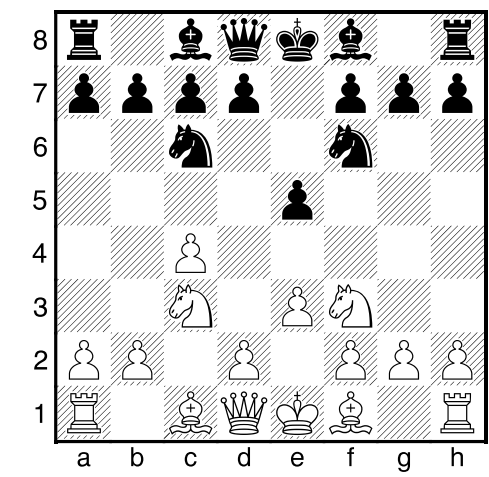
2...♘c6 3.e3:

3...g6 see: **Sambuev**

3...♘c5 see: **Zhou**.

3.♘f3 ♘c6 4.e3

The characteristic move of the DC REP.



4...d5

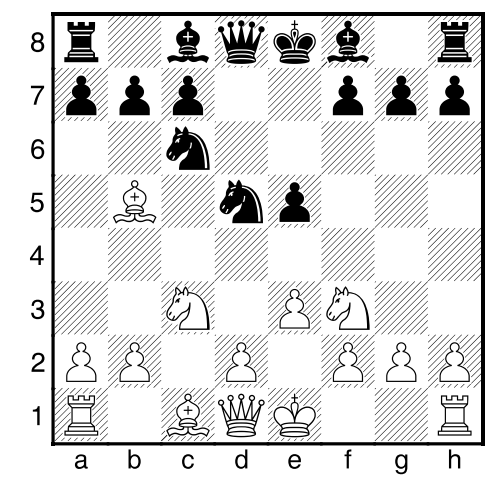
4...♘b4! is by far the most popular move among GMs, and the subject (including transpositions) of the first *three* chapters of DC, where White continues with 5.♙c2 and ♘d5 or a3, depending on Black's next.

But 4...♘b4 was an uncommon move against me

(mostly ...d5, ...d6). I think this shows that my opponents at this very far-from-GM level are not nearly as up-to-date on this White system as they would be against lines with g2-g3, let alone more mainline openings with 1.e4 or 1.d4.

That could be a good practical reason to try this opening, *and* also a clue as to how to prioritize your studying: these are the first chapters in DC, but they could well be the last ones you need to study.

5.cxd5 ♘xd5 6.♙b5



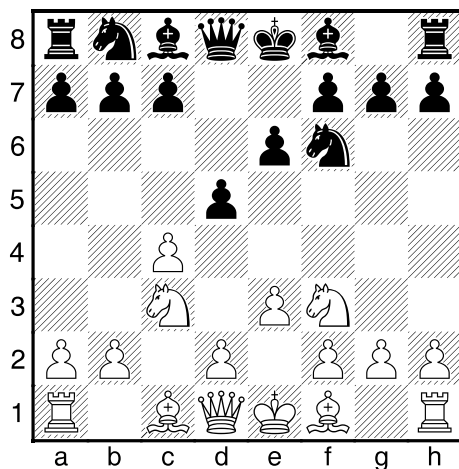
Taimanov Reversed

A surprisingly common position in my experience.

see: **Donev, Simic, Yang**.

B) ...d5 Defences

4.e3



A major branching point, with many transpositions. I will mention three:

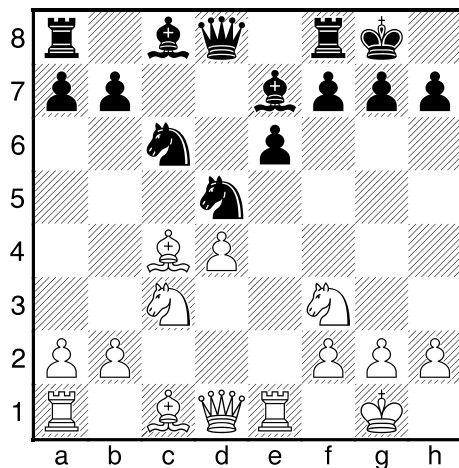
- 4... c5 Tarrasch (to IQP)
- 4... c6 Semi-Slav (Anti-Meran)
- 4... ♖e7 QGD-style (various)

I. Tarrasch

4...c5 5.cxd5

Black can choose between:

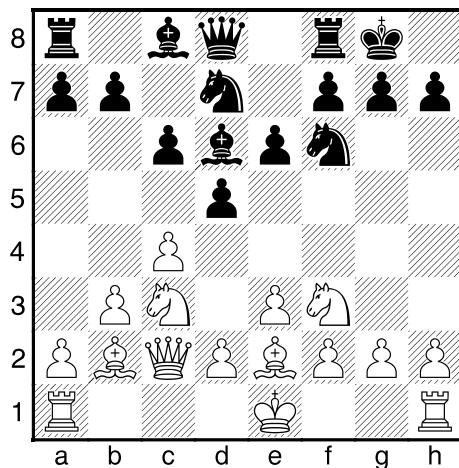
- a Tarrasch with: 5...exd5 6.d4 ♘c6 (6...a6 is in DC; 6...c4!? is not in DC.)
- or Semi-Tarrasch: 5...♘xd5 6.♖c4 (see: **Huang**) 6...♘c6 7.0-0 ♖e7 8.d4 cxd4 9.exd4 0-0 10.♖e1



With a thorough description of this fundamental IQP position, including the classic **Botvinnik-Alekhine** Netherlands, 1938 (1-0, 51), which continued 10...b6?! 11.♘xd5!

II. Semi-Slav

4...c6 5.b3 ♘bd7 6.♖c2 ♖d6 7.♖b2 0-0 8.♖e2



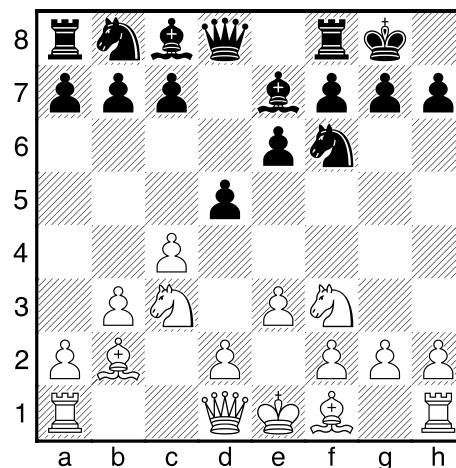
Anti-Meran

8...♖e8 (8...b6 9.♖g1!?) 9.0-0 b6 10.d4 ♖b7 11.♖fd1∞ continuing ♖ac1, g3, ♖f1-g2, ready for any pawn moves in the center.

With best play from here the position is balanced, as Cummings admits and as tournament results show. That might sound disappointing, but the Semi-Slav — like the Nimzo and Grunfeld — is one of Black's best defences to 1.d4, and transposing to it this way doesn't change that fact.

III. QGD

4...♖e7 5.b3 0-0 6.♖b2



6...b6

6...c5 7.cxd5 ♘xd5 8.♖c2 ♘c6 9.h4!? **Karjakin,S** (2760)–**Anand,V** (2762) Moscow

Candidates, 2016 (1-0, 43).

7.cxd5 exd5 8.d4

with a Colle–Zukertort (see: [soolking67](#))

8...♖b7 9.♖d3 ♘bd7 10.0-0 **Kovalenko,I** (2656)–**Skliarov,V** (2304) Luts'k, 2015 (1-0, 31).

C) Symmetrical

1.c4 c5

This is Chapters 5-9. That's nearly 1/3 of the book, but it is much less frequent than that in GM games, and much *much* less frequent in my own games, most of which reached Maroczy positions after:

2.♘f3 ♘c6

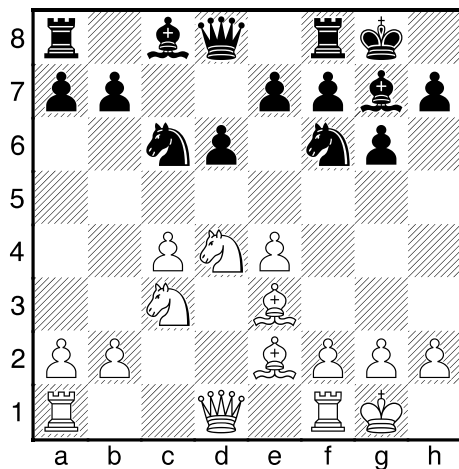
2...♘f6 3.♘c3 d5 4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.e3 and Black can transpose to a Grunfeldy line with 5...♘xc3 or 5...g6 6.♖b3!, or transpose to a Semi-Tarrasch with 5...e6 6.♖c4. 5...g6 6.h4!?

3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 g6 5.e4 ♖g7 6.♖e3 ♘f6 7.♘c3 d6





8.♔e2 0-0 9.0-0



With a standard Maroczy vs Dragon setup that can also be reached after 1.e4 c5. I won't go into this, but if you play either side here, study **Panjwani's** excellent *The Hyper-Accelerated Dragon*. From here, both books cover this (and more):

9...♕d7 10.♖d2

Panjwani thinks White keeps a small edge after 10.♖c2.

10... ♖xd4 11.♕xd4 ♕c6
12.f3 a5 13.b3 ♖d7 14.♕e3
♖c5 15.♖ab1 e6!? 16.♕d1
they overlap to here, when
Raja's book recommends:
16...♖c7! which is not in DC.

Games

John vs Internet junk

Hourly Blitz Arena lichess.org,

19.06.2019

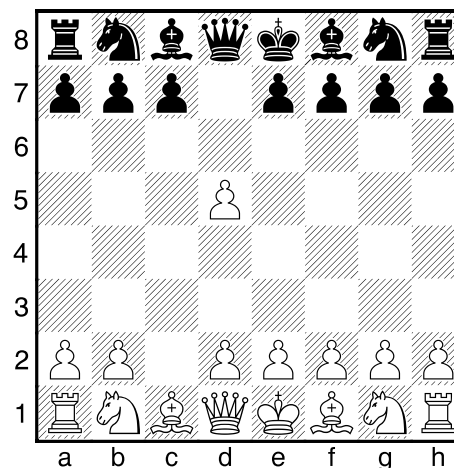
Notes: John Upper

The following game and inserts are online blitz from lichess and chess.com. The quality of the games is low, but gives a good idea of the range of "non-book" responses you'll get online at levels below 1900 against the repertoire in David Cummings's *The English*.

1.c4 d5?!

This is a surprisingly common response in lower levels online. I suspect it's because 1... d5 is a (nearly) universal first move — except against 1.c4 — and inexperienced players don't prep for 1.c4.

2.cxd5



2...♖f6

2...♖xd5 3.♖c3:

3...♖c6 4.d4 ♖f6 5.e4 e6 6.♕b5
♖xb5 7.♖xb5 ♕b4+ 8.♕d2 ♕d6
9.e5 ♖e4 10.exd6 1-0 JKU-
Anonymous lichess unrated blitz,
2017.

3...♖a5 4.d4 ♖f6 5.♕d2 ♕g4
6.f3!? ♕h5 7.e4 e6? 8.♖d5!+-
there's no way to save the ♖a5
and stop the ♖xc7 fork. (1-0, 22)
Upper-mrsamo (1337) Chess.
com, 2019.

3... ♖d8 4.♖f3 ♖c6?! 5.d4 ♖f6
6.e4 ♕g4 (6...e5 7.d5!) 7.♕e3
(♖7.d5 ♖e5 8.♖xe5! ♕xd1
9.♕b5+- Black ends up down
a piece.) 7...e6 8.♕b5 ♕e7 9.h3
(≤9.d5 exd5 10.exd5 a6±)

9...♕h5 10.♖a4 ♖d7? 11.♖e5+-
(11.d5+- also wins.) 11...♖d6
12.♖xc6 a6 13.♖xe7+ ♖xe7
14.e5 ♖d5 1-0 Upper-cr2016
(1542) lichess.org, 2017.

3.e4!?

DC REP recommends 3.♖c3
♖xd5 4.♖f3 transposing into
either 4...g6 the anti-Grunfeld
with 5.h4!? (see next game) or
QGD-style mainlines with 4...c5
5.e3 (see: **Huang**).

3...♕d7

3...♖xe4?? yes, this happens:
4.♖a4+, when some players
resign immediately (1-0, Upper,J
-Murad91 (1547) lichess.org,
2019), and others play on:
4...♕d7 5.♖xe4 etc. Upper-
Keko-shell (1703) lichess.org,
2017 (1-0, 14).

♖3...c6 4.dxc6 ♖xc6 5.♖c3
e5 Black is playing a Morra
Reversed, but White has
committed to e4 early, so
somewhere between ± and ±,
though there are lots of ways for
White to self-destruct.

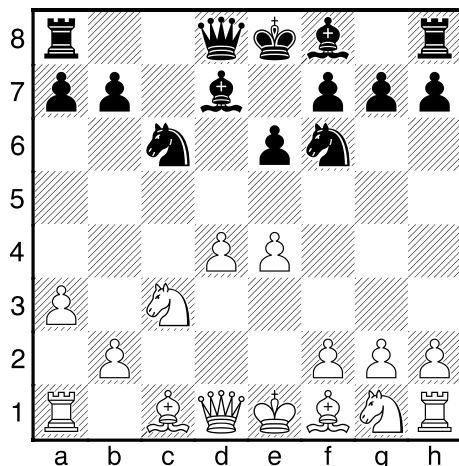
4.♖c3



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4.♔b3!

4...c6 5.dxc6 ♖xc6 6.d4 e6
7.a3?!±



Safety first? White should continue with normal development like ♘f3.

7...♙e7 8.♘f3 0-0 9.♙e2 ♔b6
10.0-0 ♜fd8 11.♙e3 ♔xb2??
12.♘a4-+
Trapping the ♔.

12...♔xa1 13.♔xa1 ♘xd4
14.♘xd4
♙14.♔xd4 ♙b5 15.♙xb5 ♜xd4
16.♘xd4 with two extra pieces.

14...♙xa4 15.♔b1+-
White is up a ♔ for a ♜, and kept a winning advantage... until

losing on time at move 42 to Bhongaler.

0-1

SUMMARY

Most of these games were early third-rate deviations from Black, and decided by crude blunders. I think this is more common with the DC rep than with other better-known openings like the London System or 1.d4 2.c4, but do not know whether a 1.e4 gambit-based repertoire might score even more easy wins.

- +1 DC REP
- At this level, tactical alertness is clearly much more important than deep opening prep.
- Having a winning advantage on the board is irrelevant if you lose on time.

Upper, John (2054)
PainKiller2017 (2154)
A16

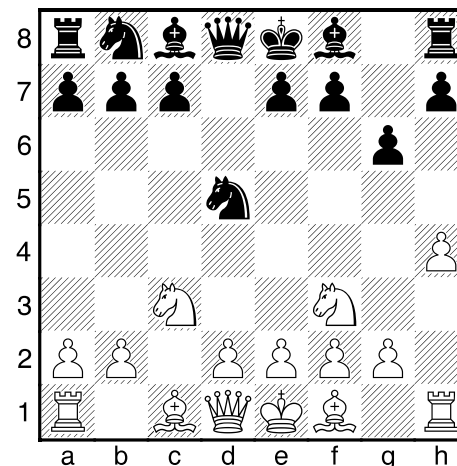
Casual Blitz game lichess.org,
06.05.2019

Notes: John Upper

1.c4 ♘f6 2.♘c3 d5 3.cxd5
♘xd5 4.♘f3 g6 5.h4!?

Black wants a Grunfeld, and White can oblige with... 5.d4 ♙g7 6.e4 ♘xc3 7.bxc3 c5 etc.

5.h4 is the DC REP anti-Grunfeld.



5...h5

This is one of **six** moves discussed in DC REP; the others are: ♘f6, ♙g7, ♘c6, h6, and ♘xc3. For example, 5...♙g7 6.e4 ♘xc3 7.dxc3 ♔xd1+ 8.♔xd1± when Black would rather have his DSB on a different diagonal. This is one point of going for h2-h4 before e2-e4. The DC REP covers three Black development schemes from here.

6.♔b3!?!±

I used to play the Russian System against the Grunfeld, so I switched to something like it here. I didn't know it at the time, but Leela engines clearly favour this as the best move.

6.e4 is the DC Rep move, which continues: 6...♘xc3 7.dxc3 ♔xd1+ 8.♔xd1 ♙g4 9.♔c2 ♘d7 10.♘g5 f6 11.f3 fxg5 12.fxg4, but here instead of ...gxh4 as in DC, after 12...hxg4N 13.♙xg5 ♙h6! I don't see an advantage for White: the Bishop pair won't last, and Black's ♘e5 will be the best minor piece.

6...c6?!

6...♘b6 7.d4± looks like an improved version of the Russian System for White... but to know this you'd need to have studied that line. White also has 7.♘g5!? e6±.

7.e4 ♘f4? 8.d4±

Finishing development with a threat...

8...♙g7??

... which Black doesn't see,

until...

9.♙xf4

... it's time to resign. Which he did immediately!

1-0

SUMMARY

As in the previous game, White won because Black blundered just out of the opening. How much of that is due to the DC REP? I don't have enough info to say; but I have never won so quickly against any 2000+ Grunfeld player — who *have* to be booked up. Then again, this was an internet game, so maybe my opponent was drunkenly experimenting with the Grunfeld and had no clue how to play it. Or maybe he did know the Grunfeld, but was just drunk. So many mysteries.

- +1 DC REP; surprise value.
- but -1 DC REP: check the note at move 6 for possible improvements over DC.
- +1 Painkiller2017: it is a rare pleasure to have a lichess opponent who resigns rather than disconnects.

Upper, John (1966) Beckwith, Paul (2113)

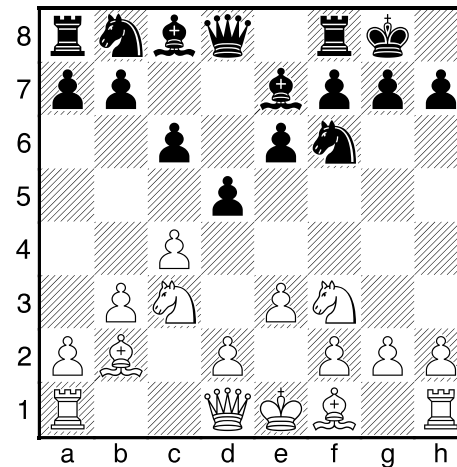
A13

RACC Sunday Rapid Ottawa (2),
26.08.2018

Notes: John Upper

The following was an unrated 10m + 5s Rapid game at the RACC in Ottawa. My opponent had previously been rated over 2300, but since then got a job, got married, got a house, had three kids... with the predictable damage to his chess. So sad. #priorities

1.c4 ♘f6 2.♘c3 e6 3.♘f3 d5
4.e3 ♙e7 5.b3 0-0 6.♙b2 c6



This move is not in DC REP, which covers ...c5, ...b6,

and ...dxc4. The game move doesn't score as well as those alternatives, which is probably why it is not mentioned, but now I'm on my own.

I remembered that the DC REP covers the triangle system (e6-d5-c6), but in lines where Black doesn't commit to ♙e7, but can play the more active ...♙d6, which allows both ...e5 and ...♙e7. I figured that that is not a huge difference, but enough to give White a bit less to worry about.

7.♙c2 dxc4?!N

Now there are no games in the MegaBase from here, so even if I *had* prepped it I would be on my own. Black seems to be trying to play a Meran, but conceding the fight for e4 without even gaining a tempo from ♙f1-d3-xc4 can't be best. That's not something I know from studying the DC REP, but from a previous struggle to find something against the Meran when I played 1.d4.

7...b6 8.♖g1!? ♙b7 9.g4 c5
10.g5∞ (1-0, 31) [Jakubowski,K](#)
(2526)–[Tokranovs,D](#) (2348)

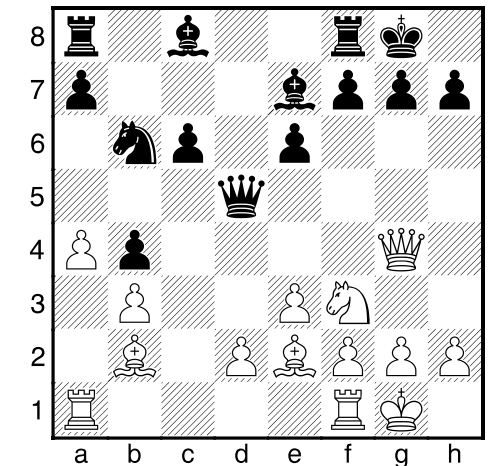
Katowice (blitz), 2017.

7...♘bd7 transposes back to the DC REP, which continues: 8.♙e2 b6 9.♖g1 ♙b7 10.g4!?

8.♙xc4 b5 9.♙e2± ♘bd7
10.0-0 ♘b6?! 11.a4

Taking on a4 leaves Black with two queenside Isos to one.

11...b4 12.♘e4 ♘xe4
13.♙xe4 ♙d5 14.♙g4!



With a mate threat and potential tempi against the ♙d5.

14...f6

14...e5 15.♙g3 ♙xb3 16.♙xe5+.

14...g6 15.♙f4 (15.♙d4 ♙xd4
16.♘xd4 ♙d7±) 15...♘d7 16.♙c4





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(16.♔h6) 16...♔f5 (16...♔d6
17.♔h6 ♕f6 18.♘g5+-) 17.♔c7±;

15.a5□+- ♔xb3
15...♘d7 16.♕c4+-.

16.axb6 ♔xb2 17.b7! ♕xb7
18.♔xe6+

18.♔xe6+ ♖f7 and White can choose the fancy 19.♖a2 trapping the ♔, or the move I saw: 19.♕c4 winning a piece to 19...♖af8 20.♔xe7+-.
Black resigned.

1-0

SUMMARY

Despite being an expert-level player, Black played the opening poorly, so DC gets credit here. White had to find some not-so-obvious tactics (15. a5) to win quickly, so... PuzzleRush gets the rest of the credit for that.

- +1 DC REP
- +1 knowing related openings
- +2 PuzzleRush tactics

#priorities

Big and little Beckwiths.



Stijn with GM Elshan Moradiabadi at the 2014 Canadian Open in Ottawa.

Upper, John (2201) De Kerpel, Stijn (2129)

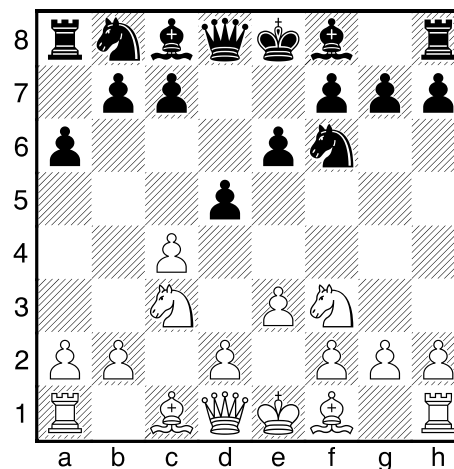
A17

RACC Ch Ottawa (5), 21.02.2019

Notes: John Upper

This game was part of the RACC Championship, at 90+30, against an expert who was over 2200 five years ago.

1.c4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 e6 3.♘c3 d5
4.e3 a6!?



5.d4

I had a long think now. I remembered that the main idea here is to aim for IQP or hanging pawn positions with b3 and central pawn trades, but at the board I worried about Black counterplay with ...♕b4.

DC REP
continues: 5.b3 c5

6.♕b2 is not in DC, but might be good enough for a small plus:

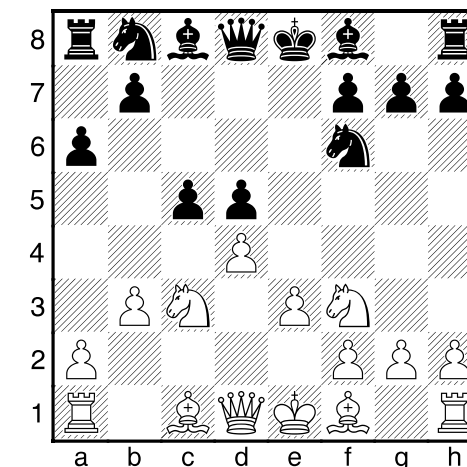
6...d4?! Going for a reversed-Benoni is an equalizer against

some Reti lines, but the d2 pawn makes a big difference here; e.g. 7.exd4 cxd4 8.♘e2 and Black will lose the d-pawn, either on d4 next, or 8...d3 9.♘f4±. Note that if White had played d2-d3, then Black could get an advantage by supporting the d4 pawn with 8...e5, which would be tactically supported by ♔a5+.

6...♘c6 7.cxd5 exd5 8.d4
♕g4 9.♕e2 ♕xf3 10.♕xf3 cxd4
11.exd4 White has to be a bit better with the ♕s, but it's not so much with the center stabilized.
Kovalyov,A (2629)–**Vera,R** (2434) **Montreal, 2018** (1-0, 54).

6.cxd5 exd5 7.d4

Analysis Diagram:





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The DC REP continues with 7...♖c6 (see below), but OTB I noticed and worried about lines ...♙b4 which I should have checked at home when first studying the REP:

7...cxd4 8.♘xd4 ♙b4!? 9.♙b2 (9.♙d2 ♘c6 I thought this was prospectless for White) 9...♘e4 10.♙c2 ♙a5 11.♙d3!? (11.♙c1 ♙xa2) 11...♙xc3+ (11...♘xc3?! 12.a3±) 12.♙xc3 ♘xc3 13.♙d2∞ White is temporarily down a piece for some tempi, but the ♘c3 can't be held.

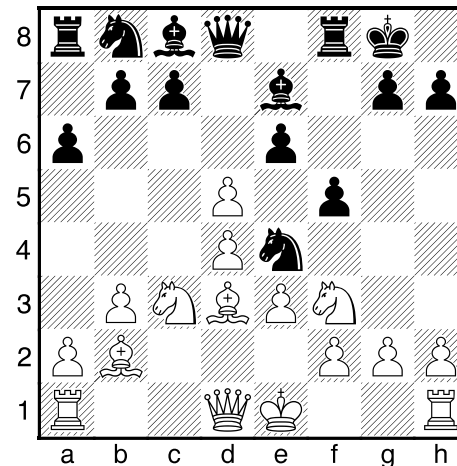
7...♘c6 8.♙b2 cxd4 9.♘xd4 ♙b4!? (9...♙d6 is the usual place for the ♙. 10.♙e2 0-0 11.0-0 with an approximately equal game. Here is a recent, crazy game, from the current Canadian Champion: 11...♙e8 12.♙f3 ♘e5 13.♙xd5! ♘eg4 14.♘f3 ♘xh2? 15.♘xh2!N ♙xh2+ 16.♙xh2 ♘g4+ 17.♙g3! ♙d6+ 18.♙f3! (18.f4? ♙g6) 18...♙h6 19.♙d4! ♙h5 20.♙h1 1-0 [Nepomniachtchi,I](#) (2774)–[Bareev,E](#) (2643) Amsterdam, 2019.) 10.♘xc6 bxc6 11.♙d3 d4? looks like a clean equalizer, but it's bad for a very pretty

reason: 12.exd4 ♙xd4 and now a Stockfish move I almost certainly would not have considered OTB: 13.0-0!! ♙xc3 14.♙e1+□± with a better structure and either the ♙-pair or big lead in development no matter what Black does.

5...♙e7

5...dxc4 6.♙xc4 b5 7.♙e2 ♙b7 8.0-0 ♘bd7 9.b3 c5 10.♙b2 ♙e7 11.♙c1 0-0= (0-1, 59) [Mamedyarov](#) (2817)–[Carlsen](#) (2835) St Petersburg (blitz) 2018.

6.b3 0-0 7.♙b2 ♘e4N 8.♙d3 f5 9.cxd5



9...exd5??

Not remembering my opening is more than made up for by my

opponent missing a basic tactic. 9...♘xc3± was better.

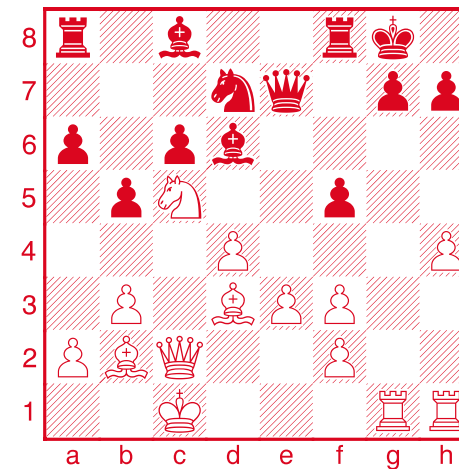
10.♘xd5+-

The ♘d5 is saved by ♙c4 pin.

10...♙d6 11.♙c2 c6 12.♘c3 ♘g5 13.h4!?

I had been reading Paul Keres's two volumes of his collected games, and I suspect I was under the influence here.

13...♘xf3+ 14.gxf3 ♙e7 15.♘a4 ♙e6 16.♘c5 ♙c8 17.0-0-0 b5 18.♙dg1 ♘d7



White is up a pawn, with better development and pressure on the g-file. Who could ask for more...?

19.f4

So that on ...♘xc5 dxc5 Black can't oppose the DSB with ...♙e5. This is positionally sensible, but there was a killer shot which did not cross my mind: 19.♘e6!! If Black doesn't take it the ♘ goes to g5, with hits on f7 and f5, and another White piece is ready for a kingside attack. But if White takes it 19...♙xe6 20.d5!+- opens the attack on g7 with tempo on the ♙.

19...♘f6 20.♙g5 ♘d5 21.♙hg1 ♙f7 22.♙b1 ♙f8 23.♙e2 ♙aa7 24.♘d3 ♙ac7 25.♙h5 ♙fe7 26.♙f3 ♙e6 27.♘c5 ♙c8 28.a3 ♙f7 29.b4?!±

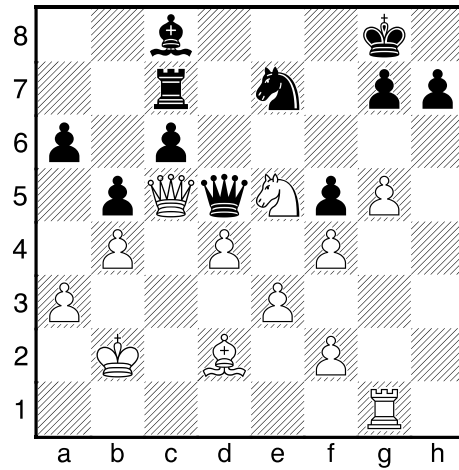
White has managed not to blunder the pawn back, but is the ♙b2 any better than the ♙c8?

29...♙e7 30.♙h5 ♙xg5 31.♙xf7+ ♙xf7 32.hxg5 32.♙xg5 h6 33.♙g2 ♙h5±.

32...♙h5 33.♘d3 ♙e8 34.♘e5 ♙e6 35.♙c1 ♙d6 36.♙d2 ♙e6 37.♙c5 ♘e7 38.♙b2 ♙d5



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Either recapture on c5 gives White's DSB some play.

39.♖c1 ♔xc5?!

39...♙e6! and see how White tries to break through.

40.bxc5 ♙e6 41.♙a5 ♖c8

42.♔c3 ♘d5+ 43.♔d3 g6

44.♖a1 ♔g7 45.♙d2 h5

46.gxh6+ ♔xh6 47.♖g1 ♘e7 48.f3

If I'd played this at move 45 then ♙e1 (going to h4) would be a faster regrouping.

48...♔g7 49.♖h1 ♖a8 50.♙e1

♖c8 51.♙h4 ♘d5

51...♖h8? 52.♙f6+-.

52.♙g5

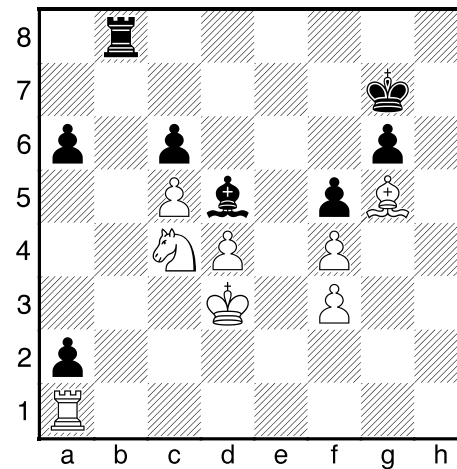
Defends f4 — making e3-e4 a threat, and threatening ♖h6.

52...b4! 53.e4 bxa3

A decent try in time trouble and a bad position, and one that should have swindled the 1/2 point.

54.exd5 ♙xd5 55.♖a1 a2

56.♘c4 ♖b8



57.♔c3?

Black had been playing on increment for a long time here, and had finally had enough.... so he resigned.... very luckily for White, because here 57...♖b1! draws: 58.♖xa2 ♖c1+=. Needless to say, we both missed this.

Instead of the game blunder, White should have played 57.♘b6 blocking the

rook and threatening to eliminate the defender of the advanced pawn; e.g. 57...♙b3 (57...♙xf3 58.♖xa2+-) 58.d5! cxd5 59.♔c3+-.

1-0

SUMMARY:

Black played a sideline at move 5 and I did not handle the transpositions as accurately as in DC. I will take most of the blame for this, but it may have something to do with the large number of possible transpositions inherent in the repertoire.

Black blundered a center pawn to a crude tactic on move 9. White (and Black) both blundered a draw late in a time-pressure filled endgame. Overall: blunders and time pressure errors were far more important than opening prep.

- +0 REP
- Repertoire irrelevant when opponent blunders material.
- Repertoire irrelevant when carelessly blundering away winning endgame.
- Repertoire irrelevant when

opponent resigns in drawn position.

Upper, John (2092) soolking67 (2531)

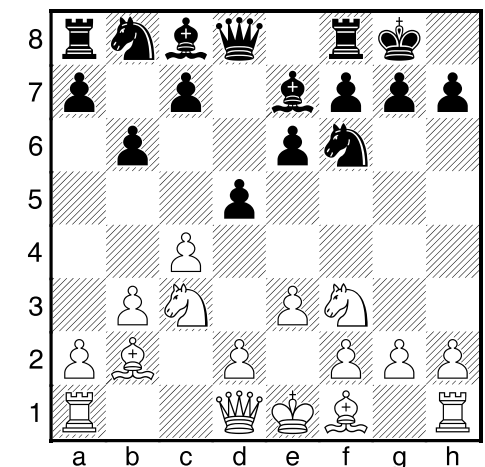
E14

*** Titled Tuesday Blitz Chess.
com (1), 04.06.2019

Notes: John Upper

The following game was against Algerian [IM Ali Nassr](#) in a chess.com Titled Tuesday blitz tournament (3+2). Get your "National Master" title kids and you too can have a free chess.com diamond membership and play in Titled Tuesdays!

1.c4 e6 2.♘c3 d5 3.e3 ♘f6 4.♘f3 ♙e7 5.b3 0-0 6.♙b2 b6





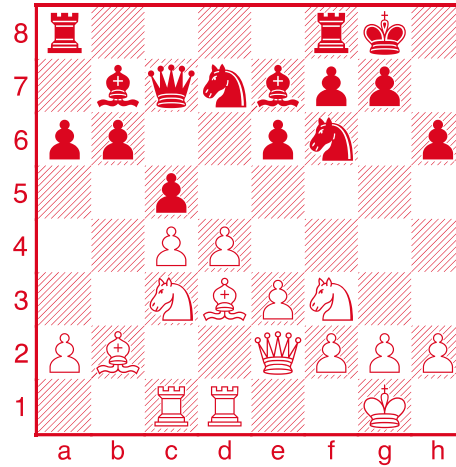
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7.d4

This is perfectly playable, and can transpose, but it's not the DC REP move: 7.cxd5 exd5 8.d4 "...is my repertoire choice, entering the Zukertort system (often reached via a Queen's Indian with 4.e3) but one where Black has committed his bishop to the e7-square rather than the generally preferable d6-square. White's typical plan here is to plant a knight on the e5-square, supported by a pawn on f4, and play for central control and/or a kingside attack." – DC

That line continues: 8...♗b7 9.♗d3 ♘bd7 10.0-0 with four moves analyzed: 10...♞e4, ...c5, ...a6, and 10...♖e8.

7...♗b7 8.♗d3 dxc4 9.bxc4 c5 10.0-0 a6 11.♖c1 h6 12.♔e2 ♘bd7 13.♖fd1 ♔c7?! 13...cxd4=.



What happens on 14.d5!?

14.♞e5?!

Allows Black some favourable trades.

14.d5! is obviously the critical move, but after 14...exd5 15.♞xd5 ♞xd5 16.cxd5 ♗xd5 I didn't see the comp for the pawn sac, but here it is: 17.♗c2! A surprisingly potent move: attacking the ♗d5 and preparing to use the ♗♗ batteries to poke holes in the Black kingside:

17...♗xf3 18.♔d3! ♞f6 19.♗xf6 g6 20.♗b3!! ♗xf6 21.♔xg6+ ♗g7 22.gxf3±;

17...♗c6! 18.♔d3 g6 19.♗b3 (X ♔xg6+) 19...♔h7 20.♔c3 ♗f6 21.♖xd7 ♗xc3 22.♖xc7 ♗xb2 23.♖c2 ♗xf3 24.♖xb2 c4 (24...♗e4?? 25.♗xf7+-) 25.♗xc4 (25.gxf3 cxb3 26.♖xb3 b5=) 25...♖ac8 26.♖xc8 ♖xc8 27.gxf3 ♖xc4 28.♖xb6 ♖a4 29.♖b2 White is nominally better, but Black should draw.

14...cxd4 15.exd4 ♞xe5 16.dxe5 ♞d7 17.f4 17.♞d5!?

17...♞c5 18.♗b1 ♖ad8 19.♖xd8 ♖xd8 20.♗a3?? 20.♖d1±

20...♞b3! 21.axb3 ♗xa3 22.♖d1 ♖xd1+ 23.♔xd1 ♗c5+ 24.♔f1 f5! So White can't block on e4.

25.♔h5? ♗c6 26.♔e2 b5 27.cxb5 axb5 28.♗d3 ♗b6 29.♞d1 ♗c1 30.♗xb5 ♔xf4+ 31.♞f2 ♔xh2

0-1

SUMMARY

White deviated first on move 7, but kept an edge out of the opening before mishandling the transition to dynamic pawn-play in the center. More practice with the Zukertort-style hanging-pawn center would certainly have helped, but is that the job of an opening book?

- +1 REP
- It might help to study the middlegames you get.

Upper, John (2206) Huang, Qiuyu (2253)

A17

Quebec Open Longueuil (9),
28.07.2018

Notes: John Upper

This was the final round of the Quebec Open. My opponent was a young FM who had beaten GM Sambuev in round 4. This round started early, and Black was 26 min late.

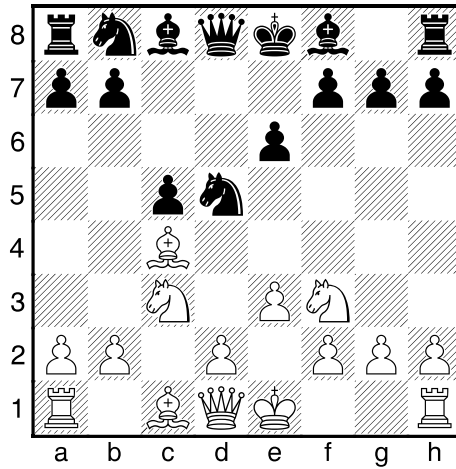
1.c4 e6 2.♞c3 d5 3.e3 ♞f6 4.♞f3 c5 5.cxd5 ♞xd5 6.♗c4 My opponent spent some time here.

John Upper

photo
pending
subject's
permission.



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6...Nb6

The Nb6 gains a tempo off the Bc4 , but is not well-placed on b6. This move is not in DC REP, which has 6...Be7 7.0-0 0-0 8.d4 cxd4 9.exd4 with a standard IQP position after 9...Nc6, or hanging pawns after 9...Nxc3.

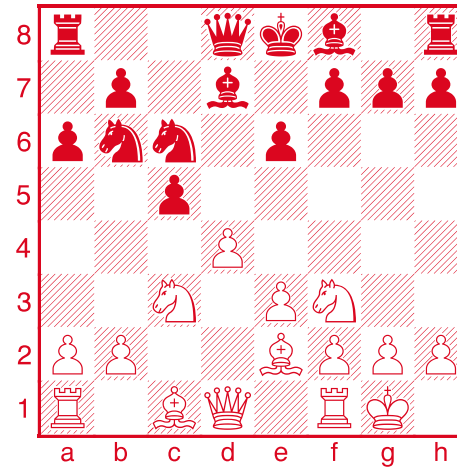
7.Be2 Nc6 8.d4 Bd7?!

Trying to prevent a Qe3 exchange if dxc5?

9.0-0 a6?!

GM v FM

Qiuyu shows Bator how he beat him.



10.dxc5!±

Maybe unexpected by my opponent: White allows the Bf8 to develop in one move, but to a

vulnerable square. The possibility of using Ns to chase the B -pair is an idea I remembered from some QGA lines, and it worked here.

10...Bxc5 11.Ne4! Qe7

11...Be7 12.Nd6+ Bxd6

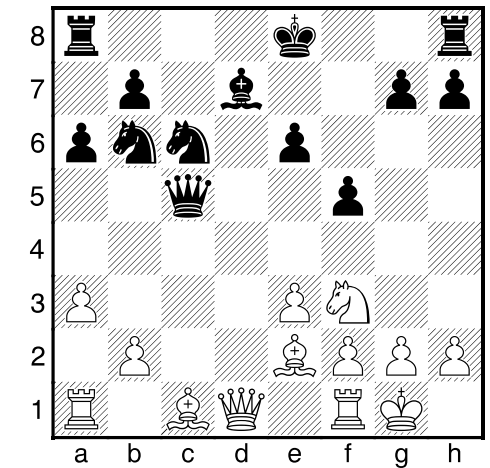
13.Qxd6± with at least the B -pair and an open center.

12.a3±

12.Nxc5 Qxc5 13.e4!± threatening to skewer with Be3 ; but I didn't see this idea until

after Black's next.

12...f5 13.Nxc5 Qxc5



14.e4!

Stockfish 11 and Leelenstein 13 both rate this position as more than +2.

14...Nc8

14...fxe4 15.Be3 Qe7 16.Ng5 Nd5 17.Nxe4 Nxe3 18.fxe3+-.

15.Be3 Qe7 16.exf5

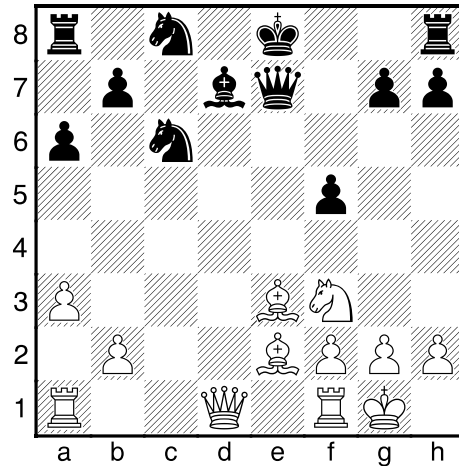
16.Rc1 developing and supporting Be3. 16...fxe4 17.Ng5+- (17.Ng5? exf3!±) 17...0-0 18.Nxe4+- Black's pawn structure is worse and White's minors dominate the central dark squares.





Chess Canada Embiggened

16...exf5?!



This should simply lose to e-file tactics; but it seems the effort to find one incisive move (14.e4) has exhausted White, who now drifts with a series of generically "good" moves, each of which helps fritter away a winning advantage.

17.♖c1

♠17.♙c4 ♙e6 (17...♚d6 18.♖e1+-) 18.♙g5+-.

17...♚f6 18.♚d2?!

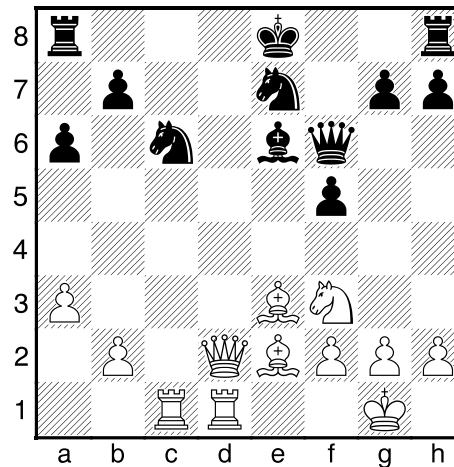
♠18.♖e1 or 18.♙g5.

18...♘8e7 19.♖fd1?!

19.♙g5! I doubt I even considered this obvious move here.

19...♙e6

19...0-0-0? 20.♙b6+-.



White has many attractive ways to finish, but lazily trades some of Black's loose pieces.

20.♙c4?

♠20.♖xc6!? ♘xc6 21.♙g5 ♚f7 (21...♖d8 22.♙d3 ♚+-) 22.♚d6! threatening ♘e5, and even ♙xa6.

♠20.♙g5 ♚f7 21.♚d6 (21.♖xc6 as above) 21...♖d8 22.♖xc6!! ♖xd6 23.♖cx6 0-0 24.♘e5 ♚e8 ♚ 25.♖xe6+-.

20...♖d8! 21.♚e2 ♖xd1+?!

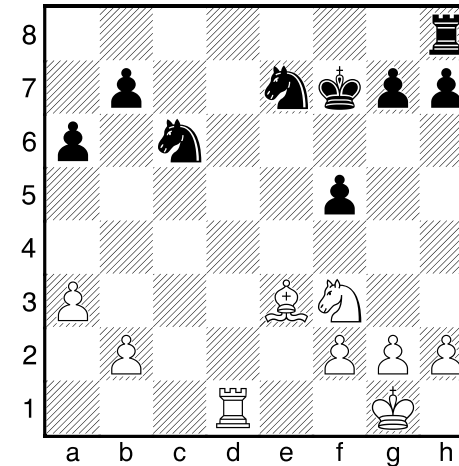
22.♖xd1 ♙xc4 23.♚xc4 ♚f7

24.♚xf7+?

Trading an exposed ♚ for an active one? ♠24.♚e2 0-0

25.♙c5+- with a material-winning bind.

24...♙xf7



White has squandered a position with a winning development advantage and central domination against an uncastled ♚, and reached a slightly favourable endgame.

Apparently, I play like Ulf Anderson when I should play like Paul Keres.

Luckily for me, Ulf Anderson wins these kind of positions :)

25.♙b6±

Controlling the open file, when tactics would have let me block in the ♖h8. This isn't bad, but better was 25.♘g5+!

25...♙e8!± and Black is still without the ♖;

25... ♙g6? 26.♖d6+ ♙h5

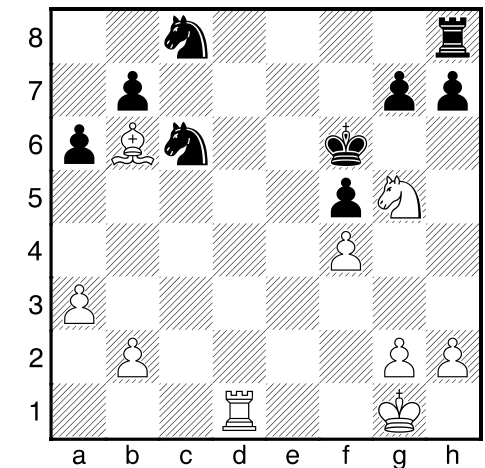
27.♘e6+-;

25...♙f6 26.♖d6+ ♙e5

27.♘f7+-.

25...♙e6? 26.♘g5+! ♙f6

27.f4 ♘c8



28.♖e1!

Now that most of the pieces are gone I start to see some tactics.

28...♙g6!

28...g6 29.♖e6+ ♙g7 30.♖xc6! bxc6 31.♙d4+ ♙g8 32.♙xh8 ♙xh8 33.♘e6±.

29.♙c5 ♖d8 30.♖e6+! ♙h5

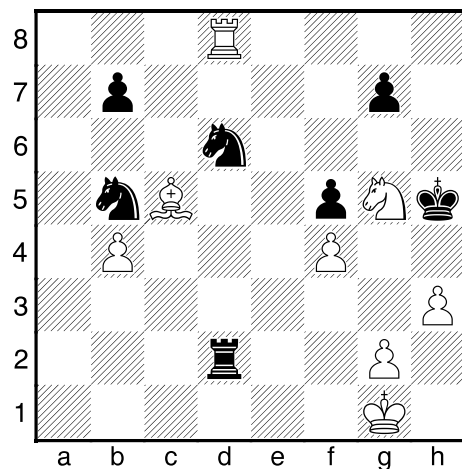
31.♘h7 ♖d5 32.b4 a5

33.h3! axb4 34.axb4 ♘d4



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35. ♖e8 ♘d6 36. ♖d8! ♘4b5
37. ♘g5 ♖d2



38. ♘f3

38. ♖h8+!? ♔g6 39. h4+-
threatens h5+, followed by ♖f8-
f7-(pin)-xg7.

38... ♖d1+ 39. ♔h2 ♔g6
40. ♘e5+ ♔f6 41. ♖d7

41. ♘c4! would transpose to
a winning Kp ending. Either I
was too lazy to calculate this
to the win, or I was enjoying
tormenting my time-trouble
plagued opponent. Either way:
not flattering.

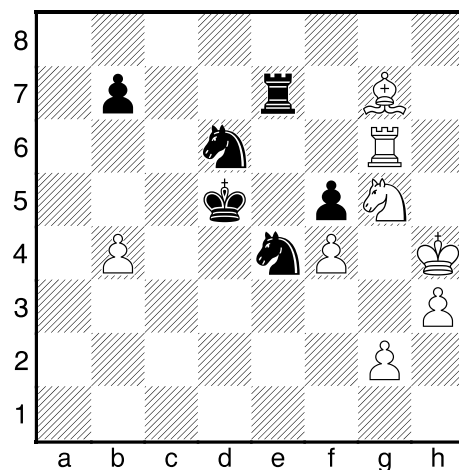
41... ♖d2 42. ♙e3?!

The c5 square really is perfect
for the ♙.

42... ♖c2 43. ♙b6 g6 44. ♙d8+
♔e6 45. ♖g7 ♔d5 46. ♖xg6
♔e4 47. ♔g3?! ♖c3+ 48. ♘f3
♔d5 49. ♙e7 ♘e4+ 50. ♔h4
♖c7

50... ♖c8 51. ♔h5+- (51. g4??
♖h8+).

51. ♙f8! ♖f7 52. ♙g7! ♘bd6
53. ♘g5! ♖e7



White's up two pawns and has
a choice of ways to force off the
pieces:

54. ♙e5

54. ♙f8 ♖c7 55. ♖e6+-;

54. ♘xe4 fxe4 55. ♖xd6+! ♔xd6
56. ♙f8+-.

54... b5 55. g4 ♘c4 56. gxf5
♘xe5

56... ♘xg5 57. ♔xg5 ♘xe5
58. fxe5 ♖xe5 59. ♖e6+- forces off
the ♖s.

57. fxe5 ♔xe5 58. ♘xe4 ♔xf5
58... ♔xe4 59. ♖e6+-.

59. ♖g4

1-0

SUMMARY

Black deviated on move 6 and
had a bad position by move
9, which White exploited with
some non-standard play to get
a winning advantage, which
he thoroughly misplayed until
turning it around in the endgame.

- +1 REP, even an FM can be caught by the repertoire's transpositions.
- Gotta be ready to think for yourself when opponent deviates, and that can happen early.
- Don't get lazy after finding one good move.
- It helps if you play opponents who give themselves a 26 minute handicap at the start of the game.

*All smiles now...
but soon she'll be looking at your king.*

Upper, John (2142)
Zhou, Qiyu (2331)

A27

RACC RR Ottawa (5), 13.04.2017

Notes: John Upper

My opponent was the 2016
Canadian Women's Champion,
and is now a WGM and in her
second year at the UofT.

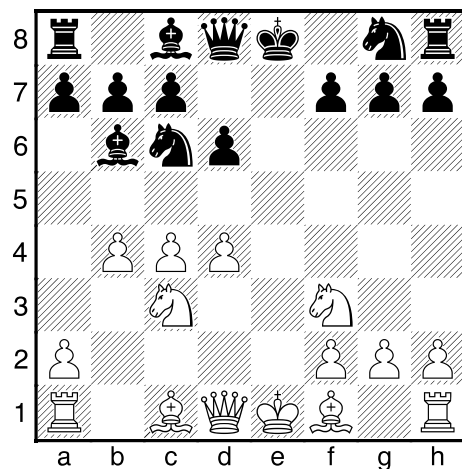
1. c4 e5 2. ♘c3 ♘c6 3. e3 ♙c5

This is more common — and
probably better — against g3
English lines. Here it's exposed
and White can chase it down or



push it out of play. I had faced this many times in online games, and remembered (more or less) what to do.

**4.♘f3 d6 5.d4 exd4 6.exd4
♙b6 7.b4**

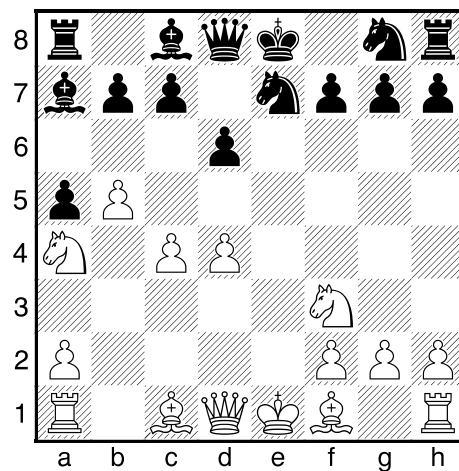


7...a5

Obviously not 7...♘xb4??
8.♙a4+ ♘c6 9.d5+.

Also in DC 7...a6 8.c5 ♙a7 9.b5 axb5 10.♙xb5± ♙d7 11.0-0 ♘ge7 12.d5 ♘e5 (12...♘b4) 13.♘xe5 dxe5 14.♙e3± "better for White as the a7 Bishop is out of play" - DC.

8.b5 ♘ce7 9.♘a4 ♙a7



10.♙b2?!N

The long diagonal looks like the natural place for the ♙, but it concedes f4 to Black. In fact, the ♙c1 is already developed where it stands.

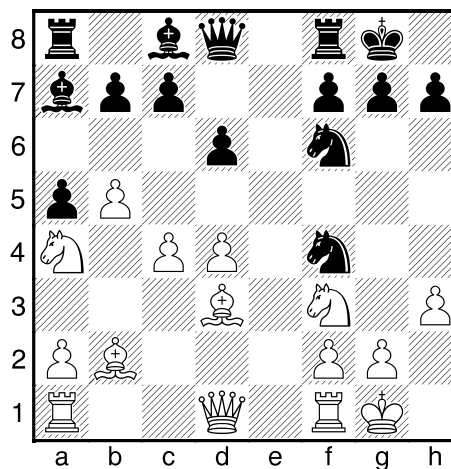
This deviates from DC, and not in a good way. I remembered there was a pawn sac with b5-b6 in the repertoire, but I didn't check it or remember it well enough to try during the game.

DC REP: 10.♙d3N ♙g4 11.b6 ♙xb6 (11...cxb6!? is what I was worried about during the game, though White is a bit better here too after something like 12.♘c3 d5 13.cxd5 ♘f6) 12.♘xb6 cxb6 13.0-0 "with an advantage for White" - DC REP.

The neural nets agree,

rating this position as ±/±, SF11 a bit less. White has sac'ed a pawn for the ♙ pair and play against Black's ragged structure.

**10...♘f6 11.♙d3 0-0 12.h3
♘g6 13.0-0 ♘f4**

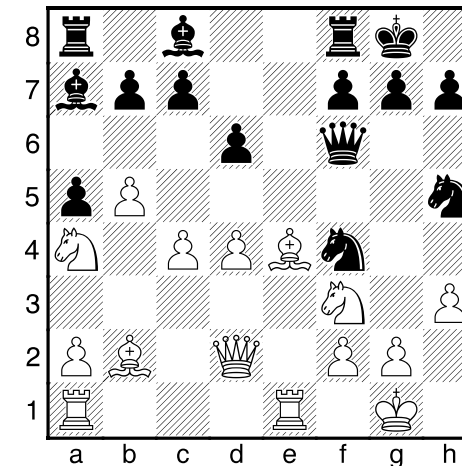


Taking advantage of the misplaced ♙b2.

14.♙d2

14.♙e1 ♙xh3? not good, but I knew my opponent would be tempted 15.gxh3 ♘xh3+ 16.♙f1□ ♘g4 17.♙f5! ♘hxf2 18.♙d2 Black has three pawns for the ♙, but her attack is over and her own kingside will come under pressure soon, not to mention the still-out-of-play ♙a7.

**14...♘6h5 15.♙fe1 ♙f6
16.♙e4
16.♙e3 ♘xd3 17.♙xd3 ♘f4
18.♙e4!=.**



26 minutes on this move, at least 10 of which passed before I noticed that Black threatened ...♘xh3+. This did not bode well for the coming complications.

16...♙f5

16...♙e8!? invites tactics, all of which seem to be good for Black, and which White should decline with 17.♙c2!±.

But if you can resist anything except temptation, here you go:

17.♙xh7+?? ♙xh7 18.♙xe8
♙g6□ (18...♘xg2?? 19.♘h4





Chess Canada Embiggened

19.♘g5+□+-) 19.♘h4□
(19.♘e1? ♘xg2-+ 20.♘xg2
♙xh3-+) 19...♙g5-+ 20.♙c2+ g6
21.d5 ♙f5! stopping mate on h8
and attacking the ♔. 22.♖xa8
f6□-+.

17.d5 freeing the ♙a7 is
strategically bad, but it might
be worth it if White improves
over the previous line and wins
material. In fact, White wins a
lot of material here... but loses!
17...♙h6! 18.♙xh7+ ♔xh7
19.♖xe8 ♙xh3!! 20.♖xa8 ♘g3□-+
threatening both ...♙xg2 and
...♘ge2.

17.♙xf5?!

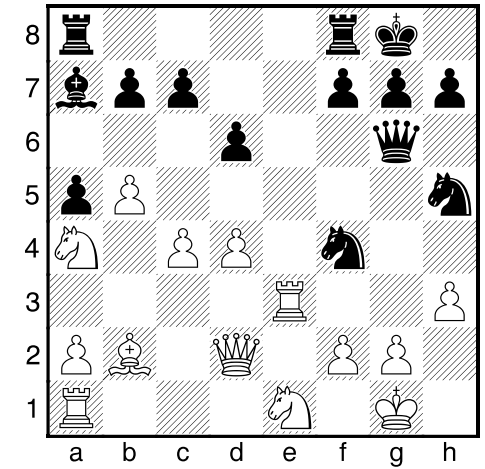
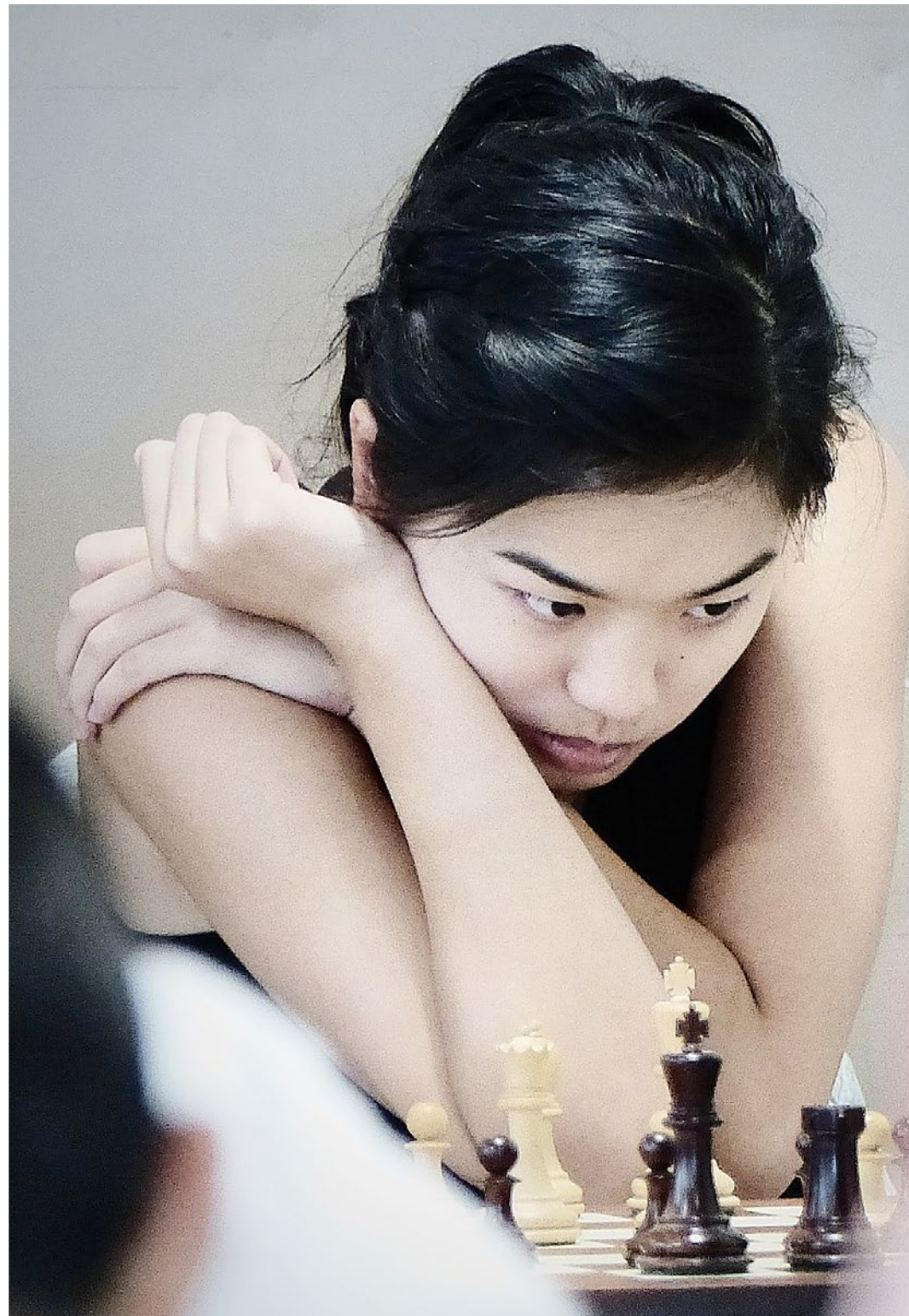
17.d5?? ♙g6□-+ 18.♘h4 ♙g5!
19.♙xf5 ♘xh3+-+ wins the ♙.

17.♔h2 ♙xe4 18.♖xe4 ♘xh3?
19.♔xh3! ♙f5+ 20.♖g4 ♘f6
21.♙g5 ♙xg4+ 22.♙xg4 ♘xg4
23.♔xg4±.

17...♙xf5 18.♖e3 ♙g6
19.♘e1

Game face.

*I warned you she'd be looking for
your king, but now it's too late...*



19...d5?

Black can't seriously expect
White to take this, and now
White's queenside pawns
become useful. Better was
19...♖ae8.

20.c5

20.cxd5 ♘xd5 21.♖f3= White's
♖ and ♘ look reversed, but
arguably all six minor pieces are
misplaced except the ♘d5.

20...♙g5

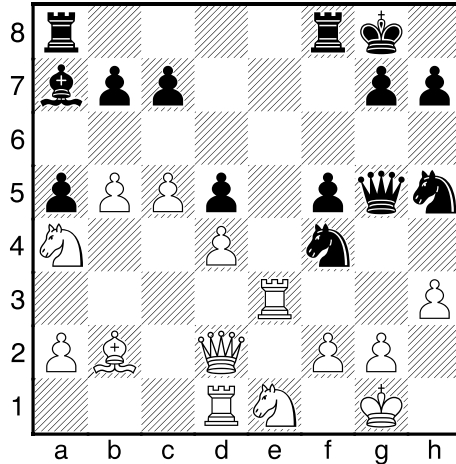
Threatening ...♘xh3. 20...c6!?
21.b6 ♙b8 concedes the a5
pawn to White, but Black is all in
on the kingside anyway.

21.♖d1

Defends the ♙, though the
weird-looking ♙c1! would do the

same with a threat, and bring the ♙ back to a better diagonal.

21...f5?!



Black would like to play ...♖f6-g6, but doesn't get the chance.

22.b6!± cxb6

This trade opens the a3-f8 diagonal, but Black didn't have a choice: 22...♙b8? 23.c6!+- bxc6 24.b7 ♖a7 25.♙a3!+-.

23.cxb6 ♙b8 24.♙a3 ♖c8

25.♘c5 ♖g6 26.♖b2

26.♘d7! is a better way to keep the b6-pawn, as it also improves the ♙a3, e.g. 26...a4 27.♙c5.

26...♖c6 27.♘d7

After 27.♖b5!? Black *should*

go 27...♙d6; because after 27...♖xb6?? Black loses...

... I saw this: 28.♖e8+

28...♖xe8 29.♖xe8+ ♔f7

30.♖xb8 ♖xb8 31.♘d7+-;

... my opponent saw the more convincing: 28.♖e8+ ♔f7 29.♖d7+ ♔f6 30.♖e7#.

27...♙d6 28.♖b1! ♖ac8

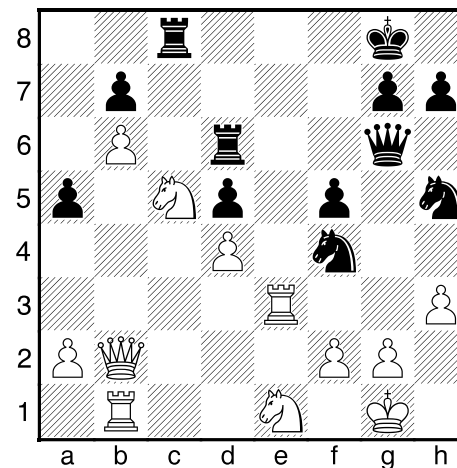
28...♖e8 29.♖xe8+! ♖xe8

30.♙xd6 ♖xd6 31.♘e5±;

28...♖g5 29.♙xd6 ♖xd6

30.♘e5±.

29.♙xd6 ♖xd6 30.♘c5!?



I wanted to keep the e-file open and threaten b7, but 30.♘e5± is more natural, safer, and probably better.

30...♖g5?

Threatening ...♘xg2 then ...♖g6, but weakening e8 lets White's threats come first. Blocking b5-e8 with a ♖ was better.

31.♖b5!+- h6 32.♔h2

32.♖e8+ ♖xe8 33.♖xe8+ ♔h7

34.♘d7? the only move I looked at here, which I didn't like after

34...♖xd7! 35.♖xd7 ♘xh3+

(35...♘xg2?? 36.♘f3 ♖g6

37.♔h2+-) 36.♔f1 ♘xf2= or

36...♘f6=;

♘32.♘xb7! looks like Kortchnoi-level greed — and it is, because White has defensive tactics to escape in all lines after 32...♖g6:

33.♖f1± is the safest, but not best;

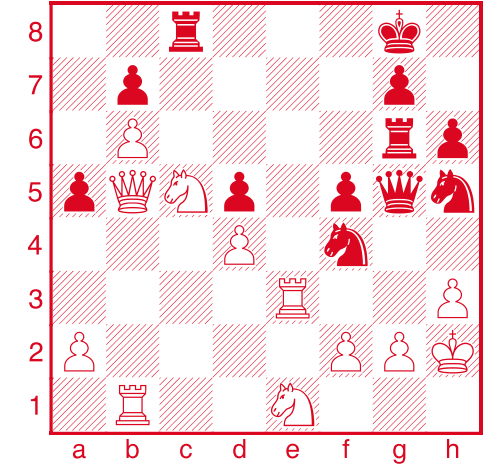
33.♖d7! is the most human, since 33... ♘xg2 34.♖xc8+ ♔h7 35.♖d8 ♖ White wins because any discovered check allows a ♖ exchange, and 35...♘f6 preserves the ♖s but loses everything else after 36.♖g3+-;

33.♘d6!! is the computer move 33... ♘xg2 (33...♖xd6 34.b7+-)

34.♖xd5+ ♔h7 35.♖xg2 ♖f6

36.♘xc8 ♖+-.

32...♖g6



33.g3??

Not threatening the ♘ (because of ...♖g1#), but blocking the attack on g2.

White had at least two much better moves:

♘33.♖e8+ ♖xe8 34.♖xe8+ ♔h7 35.♘d7!+- I completely missed the ♘ fork on f8;

♘33.♖d7!:

33...♖f8 34.♖xb7 ♘xg2?

35.♖xd5+-;

33... ♖d8 34.♖e7+-;



33...♖xg2 34.♔xc8+ ♕h7
35.♘e6 ♖xe6 36.♔xe6 ♘xe1
37.♖bx1 ♘f4 threatening mate
and the ♔, but 38.♖g1 solves
everything.

33...♕h7?

Eliminates some of White's
tactics, but not all.

33...♘xh3□= I don't think I
analyzed this at all. Based on
her later moves, Black saw it too
late. After this, the game might
go:

34.♕xh3?! shows Black's point:
34...♔g4+! (34...f4? 35.♕g2
35.♔d7□=) 35.♕g2□ (35.♕h2?
f4□ with a winning attack.) 35...
f4→

Better is 34.♘f3= ♔g4□ 35.♖e8+
(35.♘e5 ♘xf2□ 36.♔d7!∞
♔h3+ 37.♕g1 ♖xg3+ 38.♖xg3
♔xg3+ 39.♕f1 ♔h3+ and
Black should be able to force a
draw.) 35...♕h7□ (35...♖xe8??
36.♔xe8+ ♕h7 37.♘e5+- or
37.♘d7+-) 36.♘e5□ ♔xd4□
37.♘cd3 ♘xf2 38.♘xg6=
with a crazy-looking mess
the computer shows is equal:

38...♘g4+ 39.♕h3 ♖c2! 40.♘f8+
♕g8 41.♘g6+ ♕h7 42.♘f8+=.

34.♘f3!

Now the ♔ has to run and so the
♘f4 is hanging.

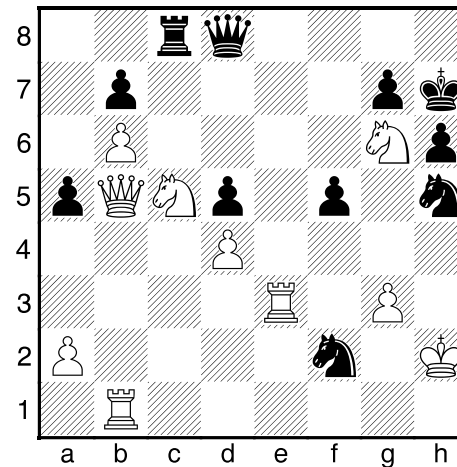
34...♔d8 35.♘e5

35.gxf4 also wins.

35...♘xh3 36.♘xg6

△36.♕xh3 was both much
simpler and objectively better.

36...♘xf2



We were both in time pressure
here, and both blundered.

37.♘e5??

Makes the ♘ safe and stops the
fork on g4, but allows Black into

the game.

37.♖f1?? ♘g4+-+;

37.♖e8? ♔xe8 38.♔xe8 ♖xe8

39.♘e5 ♖e7∞;

Instead, White wins after
either 37.♖f3+- or 37.♕g2 ♘g4
38.♖e6+-.

37...♔g5??

Missing her last chance. After
37...f4□= Black is down a ♖
but gets it all back after 38.gxf4
(38.♔d7= bails out; 38.♖g1
fxe3 39.♔b1+! ♕g8 40.♔f5∞)
38...♔h4+ 39.♕g1 ♘xf4∞.

38.♔e2!+- f4 39.♔xf2

39.gxf4 ♔xf4+ (39...♔h4+
40.♕g1□+-) 40.♕g2 ♔xd4
41.♔xh5! ♔xe3 42.♔f5+- and
takes on c8 with check on this or
the next move.

39...fxe3 40.♔g2 ♖f8 41.♘e6

1-0

SUMMARY

White had an advantage out of
the opening, and would have
had a safer advantage had I not

deviated from the DC REP. Both
players made game-changing
mistakes in a complicated
middlegame in time pressure.

- +1 for DC REP
- Tactics dominate prep.
- Time trouble triggers terrible
tactics.

Upper, John (2212) Sambuev, Bator (2569)

A25

RA December Open Ottawa (1),
07.12.2018

Notes: John Upper

My opponent in this game needs
no introduction.

1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♘c6 3.e3 g6

"Black wants to play a kind of
Closed Sicilian with colours
reversed." – DC

4.♘f3

After 4.d4 d6 Bator played: 5.d5
(5.♘f3 is the DC move order, but
it transposes.) 5...♘ce7 6.h4±
f5 7.e4 Black's KID kingside
steamroller has nothing to target
when White hasn't castled
into it. 7...♕h6 8.♕g5! ♕xg5?

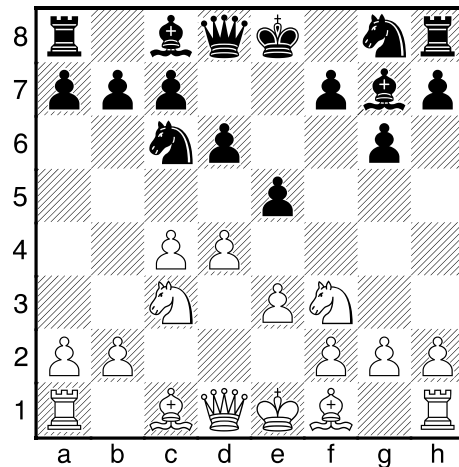


Chess Canada Embiggened

9.hxg5 h5 10.♔e2 (10.f4!) 10... fxe4 11.g4 h4 12.♘xe4 ♔d7 13.f4! exf4 14.♚d4 ♖h7 15.♘h3 ♘c8 16.♘f6+ ♘xf6 17.gxf6 ♖f7 18.g5+- (1-0, 24) **Sambuev,B (2562)–Kraiouchkine,N (2265) Trois–Rivieres, 2011.**

That was pretty convincing, and I wish I had known about it before our game; but this was round 1 and the pairings were up only a few minutes before the clocks started.

4...♔g7 5.d4 d6



6.dxe5?!

I don't recall having made a decision to meekly play for boring equality, but it sure looks like that playing through this now.

DC REP goes 6.♔e2, waiting until after ...♘f6 restricts Black's recaptures on e5. And now:

6...f5 7.0-0 e4 8.♘d2 ♘f6 9.b4!± This is in DC, and since I used to play the French, going into this "KIA-reversed" is something I'd be more than OK with.

6...♘f6 7.dxe5 ♘xe5 8.♘xe5 dxe5 9.♚xd8+ ♔xd8 10.b3± "with reasonable chances for White" – DC 10...c6 11.♔a3 ♔f5 12.0-0-0+ ♔c8 13.h3 h5 14.g4!

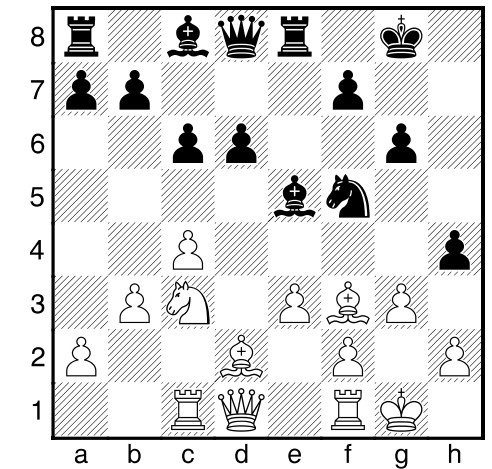


A nice pawn sac, opening the h-file when the ♖a8 can't join the fight. 14...hxg4 15.hxg4 ♔xg4 16.♖xh8+ ♔xh8 17.♔e7 ♔d7 18.♖h1 ♔g7 19.♔xf6 ♔xf6 20.♘e4 ♔d8 21.♖h7± and White threatens to simply win the f-pawn with a more active ♖, which Black delayed by 21...♔e8 22.♔g4+! ♔c7 (22...f5?? 23.♘d6+ and 24.♖xb7#) 23.♔e6! ♔e7 24.♔xf7± (1-0, 63) **Seirawan,Y–Sosonko,B** Bad Kissingen, 1981.

6...♘xe5 7.♘xe5 ♔xe5 8.♔d2 ♘e7 9.♔e2 0-0 10.0-0 10.h4!? would be more gumptiony.

10...♘f5 11.♖c1 c6 11...h5?! 12.f4 ♔g7 13.e4 ♘d4 14.f5↑.

12.b3 ♖e8 13.g3 h5 14.♔f3 h4



Black is struggling manfully for complications, while White is blithely coasting within sight of equality. This may or may not be a recommendation for White's opening.

Look away!

It hurts to watch anyone play so badly.



Chess Canada Embiggened

15.♖e2=

15.g4! would have shown some gumption, 15...♘g7 16.h3 f5 17.♙g2±.

15...hxc3 16.hxc3 ♘g7

17.♙f4

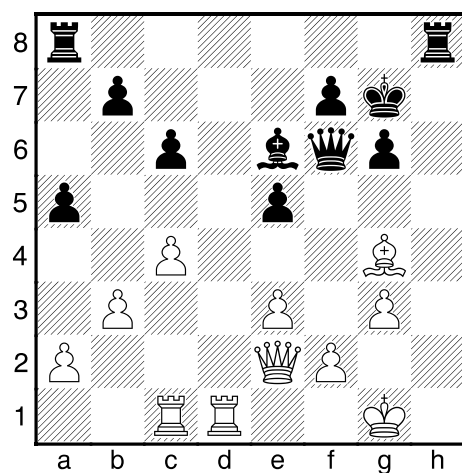
♙17.♙g2 preparing to use the h-file, here or on any of the next few moves...

17...♙e6 18.♙xe6 ♙xe6

19.♙c3?! ♙f6 20.♙xe5?!

dxe5 21.♙e2 a5 22.♙fd1

♙g7 23.♙g4? ♙h8!♣



24.♙g2??

Worse late rather than never. Better was 24.♙xe6 ♙xe6 25.e4 ♙h3 26.♙f3 g5 27.♙g2 ♙g4 28.f3 ♙e6♣ ready to double on the h-file.

24...♙xg4 25.♙xg4 ♙h2+♙-+ 26.♙xh2 ♙xf2+ 27.♙h3 ♙h8+ 28.♙h4 ♙xh4+ 29.gxh4 ♙xe3+

Unrecognizably bad play from me. Whatever was going through my head during this game was more vapid ear worms and amyloid plaques than chess ideas.

0-1

SUMMARY

Despite White's somnambulant play, the position was equal and safe for a long time, which shows how hard it can be to stir up trouble against it. That's also true of the Colle and London Systems, but here White had several ways to play for an advantage, and an awake player might have seized one.

- +1 REP
- if you don't want to play, stay home.

Danail Dubov

Upper, John (2181) Donev, Danail (1956)

A28

Ontario Open Ottawa (3),
21.05.2017

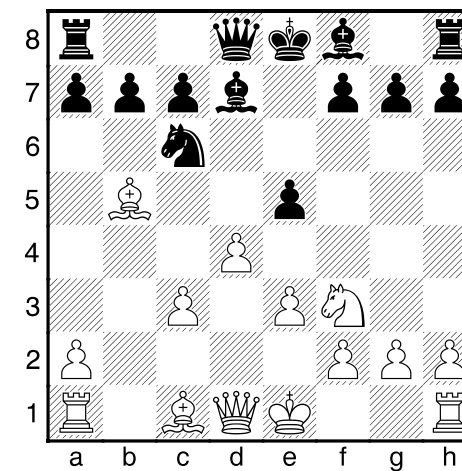
Notes: John Upper

1.c4 e5 2.♙c3 ♙f6 3.♙f3
♙c6 4.e3 d5 5.cxd5 ♙xd5
6.♙b5 ♙xc3 7.bxc3 ♙d7
7...♙d6 is the main move.

One interesting continuation is: 8.d4 e4 9.♙d2 ♙g5 10.♙f1 continuing with g2-g3, ♙g2 and eventual central expansion. DC summarizes: "White has traded his early initiative (which started with 6. ♙b5) for a longer term structural advantage."



8.d4



8...exd4

More transpositions.

8...♙d6 is the only move in the DC REP: 9.0-0 0-0 10.♙e2 (10.♙xc6 ♙xc6 11.dxe5 ♙xf3 12.♙xf3 ♙xe5 13.♙a3 c5!?

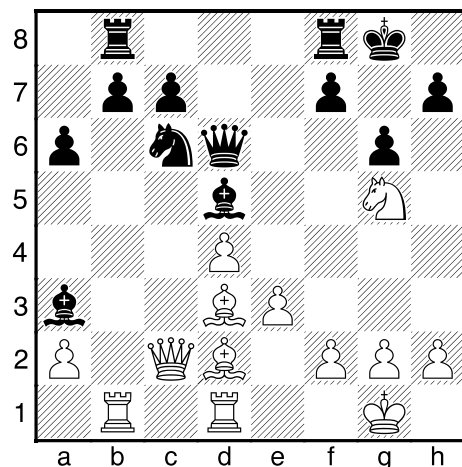
14.♙xc5 ♙xh2+ 15.♙xh2!? ♙c7+ 16.♙g1 ♙xc5 17.♙xb7= (1/2-1/2. 55) Shariyazdanov,A (2572)– Khismatullin,D (2674) Khanty–Mansiysk, 2013.) 10...♙e8 11.d5 ♙a5 (11...♙e7 12.e4 h6 13.c4 b6 14.♙e1±) 12.e4 c6N to me, this looks fine for Black.



Chess Canada Embiggened

9.cxd4 ♖e7 10.0-0 0-0
11.♖b1 a6 12.♙d3 ♖b8
13.♙d2
13.e4?! ♙g4 14.d5 ♘d4⇒.

13...♙e6 14.♔c2 g6 15.♖fc1
♙a3 16.♖d1 ♔d6 17.♘g5!
♙d5



18.e4??

A lot of moves leave White with a clear advantage, including ♘e4, ♙c4, h4; and even f3 is better than the game line. I'm not sure what I missed here — maybe the tactic at move 22 — but Black holds together despite all his loose pieces.

18...♘xd4 19.♔c3 ♙xa2!
20.♖a1?!
♙20.e5 ♔xe5 21.♖xa3 ♙xb1

22.♖xb1∞.

20...♙b3□f 21.♖db1?
21.♖e1∞.

21...♙c5!
21...♔c5? 22.♖xa3+-.
22.e5

22.♖xb3 this would be good for White, but 22...♘xb3 23.♔xb3 ♖bd8□-+ wins one of the ♙s.

22...♔d5 23.♘e4??
Abysmal.

23...♔xe4! 24.♙xe4 ♘e2+
25.♔f1 ♘xc3 26.♙xc3 ♙c4+
27.♔e1 c6 28.♙a5 ♙b5
29.♖d1 b6 30.♖ac1 ♙a3

0-1

SUMMARY

Out of book on move 8, after which White's mobile central majority gave a clear advantage. White miscalculated tactics (twice) and deservedly lost.

- +1 for the REP
- Tactics still more important than prep.

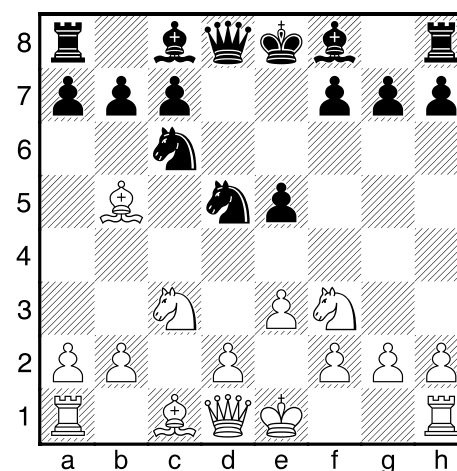
Upper, John (2102) Simic, Dusan (2162)

A28

RACC Pickup 1 Ottawa (5),
22.06.2017

Notes: John Upper

1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♘f6 3.♘f3
♘c6 4.e3 d5 5.cxd5 ♘xd5
6.♙b5



This was a very common position for me in online games. "White plays in the style of the Taimanov Sicilian with colours reversed" – DC.

6...♔d6!?

I hadn't seen this before, but SF11 and Leela rank it as Black's second-best, a bit worse than the main line with ...♘xc3. It's



Dusan Simic

covered in DB REP, which says: 6...♔d6 can be answered by 7.0-0 ♙e7 8.d4 and Black will probably have to play 8...♘xc3 in any case. – DC

7.d4?! ♘xc3

7...exd4! 8.♔xd4 (8.exd4 ♙g4=) 8...♘xc3 9.♔xc3 ♙d7= (1-0, 45) Isajevsky,A (2403)–Baraeva,M (2208) Kazan, 2016.

8.bxc3 ♙d7?!
8...exd4 9.exd4±.

9.d5?

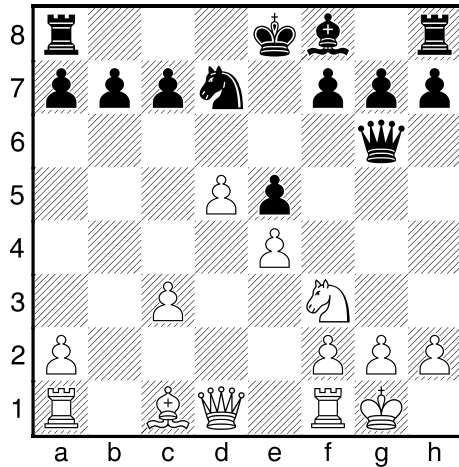
♙9.0-0 exd4 10.cxd4 ♙e7 11.♙b2± and White's center is ready to roll.



Chess Canada Embiggened

9...♖b8 10.♙xd7+?!
 ♖10.♙b3 ♙xb5 11.♙xb5+ ♘d7
 12.♙xb7 (12.0-0±) 12...♖b8
 13.♙c6±

10...♙xd7= 11.e4 ♙g6 12.0-0!?



A gambit, which Black declines.

12...♙d6?!
 12...♙xe4! 13.♖e1 ♙f5 14.♘d4
 (14.♙a4 ♙d6±) 14...♙f6 15.♙a4
 (15.f4? 0-0-0!) 15...♙d6 which
 computers say is ±, but it's
 within the margin for personal
 preference: you don't want to
 be Black here unless you are
 comfortable defending... and
 ...♙d6-g6 are not the moves of a
 natural defender.

13.♙a4!
 So Black can't castle for free.

13...♖d8 14.♘h4! ♙f6 15.♘f5
 ♙c5?!

Maybe Black was fixated on
 attacking the white King?
 15...0-0 16.h4! (16.♘xd6
 ♘c5 17.♙xa7 ♙xd6) 16...h6
 17.♙d1!± followed by switching
 to a kingside attack. This is
 a computer-recommended
 continuation which never would
 have occurred to me in any
 game.... until now.

16.♖b1! ♙b6??
 Conceding a critical diagonal.
 Better was 16...g6 17.♘h6±.

17.♙a3+
 It's over: Black's ♔ is stuck.

17...g6
 17...c5 doesn't help Black's
 position, though it might end his
 suffering more elegantly: 18.dxc6
 bxc6 19.♙xc6! ♙xc6 20.♘xg7#.

18.♙e7 ♙xe7 19.♘xe7
 ♔xe7+
 Black is down a ♙ for two
 pieces and has no threats or

weaknesses to aim at... but
 clearly had no other plans for a
 Thursday night, and so played
 on.

20.♔h1! g5 21.♙d1 ♘f6
 22.♙f3 ♖hg8 23.♙f5 ♘d7
 24.♙xh7 ♖g6 25.♙h3
 ♖dg8 26.♙g4 ♖f6 27.♙e2
 ♖h6 28.c4 ♖h4 29.g3! ♖h3
 30.♔g2! g4 31.f3 ♖gh8
 32.♖h1 gxf3+ 33.♙xf3 ♖3h6
 34.♖bf1

1-0

SUMMARY

Out of book due to a not-so bad
 Black sideline at move 6. White
 mistakenly closed the center,
 before offering a central pawn
 sac to open it. Black made two
 weak moves and was lost.

- +0 REP
- familiarity with the Black side
 of ...e6 Sicilians would
 help with the DC REP.*
- Chess is easier when
 your opponent gives
 away important squares.
 Try to get paired against
 those opponents.

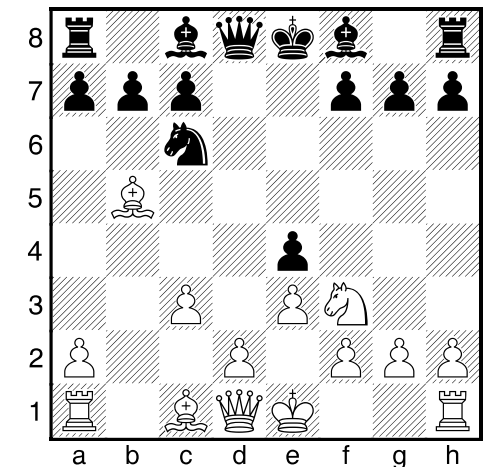
* like this, maybe...

Upper, John (2127) Yang, Fan (1913)

A28
 RACC Rapid Ch Ottawa (3),
 03.05.2019
 Notes: John Upper

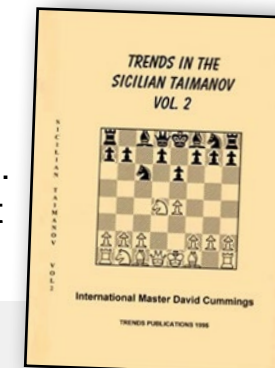
1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♘f6 3.♘f3
 ♘c6 4.e3 d5 5.cxd5 ♘xd5
 6.♙b5
 Black had a long think here.

6...♙xc3 7.bxc3 e4



8.♘d4

DC REP: ♖8.♘e5
 ♙d7 9.♘xd7 ♙xd7
 10.f3!± White is going
 to get the whole
 center. Here is a very
 convincing example:





Chess Canada Embiggened

10...a6 11.♔a4! ♕e6 12.0-0
♔d6 13.♔c2! ♕h6 14.h3 exf3
15.♖xf3!? 0-0 16.d4 ♖ad8
17.e4 ♕h4 18.♔e3 ♘a5 19.e5!
Positionally and tactically strong.
19...♔e7 (19...♔xe5 20.♔f2 ♕h6
21.♖f5 skewering the minors on
the 5th, or if Black saves them
with 21...f6 then 22.♖h5! ♕f4
23.g3+- traps the ♕.) 20.♕d3 g6
21.♖f4 ♕h5 22.♖af1 All five of
White's pieces are pointed at the
Black ♔. 22...♔g5 23.♖g4 ♔xe3+
24.♕xe3 ♘c4 25.♕f4 h6 26.♕g3
♔h7 27.♖h4 ♕e2 28.♖xf7+!
1-0 **Agdestein,S** (2630)–**Al**
Qudaimi,B (2396) Tromsøe OL,
2014.

8...♔d7
8...♕g5?! 9.♕a4□± ♕xg2
10.♖f1 ♔d6 (10...♔h3?
11.♔xc6+ ♔d8
12.♔b5□+-) 11.♘xc6±.

9.0-0
I had a long think here,
and didn't see anything
convincing; but at least
my move was better
than Nigel's... 9.♘xc6?!
♔xc6?! 10.♔xc6+ bxc6
11.♕a4 ♕d5 12.♖b1

♔c5 13.c4 ♕d6± (1-0, 57)
Short,N (2707)–**Leibenguth,P**
(1638) Bastia, 2012.

9...♔d6 10.d3! ♘xd4?
11.♔xd7+ ♕xd7 12.exd4!
exd3 13.♖e1+! ♔e7??
14.♔a3

1-0

SUMMARY

Black was out of his prep at
move 6, and responded poorly;
but White did not take maximum
advantage (see note to move 8).
Black tried to exchange his way
out of trouble and blundered.

- +1 REP
- Tactics dominate prep.



Upper, John Cummings, David

E94

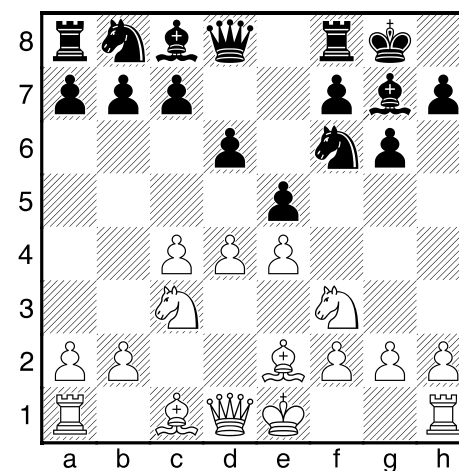
*RACC Sunday Rapid Ottawa (2),
23.07.2017*

Notes: John Upper

This game was played at an
unrated RACC Sunday Rapid
tournament, with a TC of 10m +
5s. It is the game mentioned in
our interview.

Before the game I told
David I was going to play his
repertoire against him...

1.c4 ♘f6 2.♘c3 g6 3.e4 d6
4.d4 ♔g7 5.♔e2 0-0 6.♘f3 e5



7.0-0

... but I changed my mind.

Fan Yang

I knew that David's book gave
the Petrosian variation against
the KID, but I chose not to play
it this time because after 7.d5
the DC REP covers six replies
for Black, and that was more
freedom than I wanted to allow a
player with more experience than
me.

7...♘a6

On 7...♘c6 I would have
continued with the Mar del Plata
variation, which was recc. in
Kaufman's repertoire book which
I had been playing before the
DC Rep: 8.d5 ♘e7 9.♘e1 ♘d7
10.♔e3 f5 11.f3 f4 12.♔f2 g5
13.♖c1. This line is a lot of fun,
but unless you are extremely
well-versed in it I think it is not a
good choice against lower-rated
opponents as White or Black
for two reasons: first, the play is
very stereotyped, which means
neither player has to make any
difficult strategic decisions;
second, no matter what the
rating, Black players always
have a puncher's chance with
any one of several piece sacs on
the light squares in time trouble.
Conversely, I think it's a good



choice against higher-rated opponents, who will not have a chance to safely strategically outplay me, but at some point will have to go all in with a sac which may or may not work. Horses for Courses.

8.♙e3

8.d5 would transpose to the DC rep, but, as I said, this is one player I was certain would know that book way better than I did.

8...♘g4

8...♙e8 9.dxe5 dxe5 10.a3 ♘g4 11.♙g5 f6 12.♙c1 ♘c5 13.b4 ♘e6 14.c5± is the Kaufman repertoire.

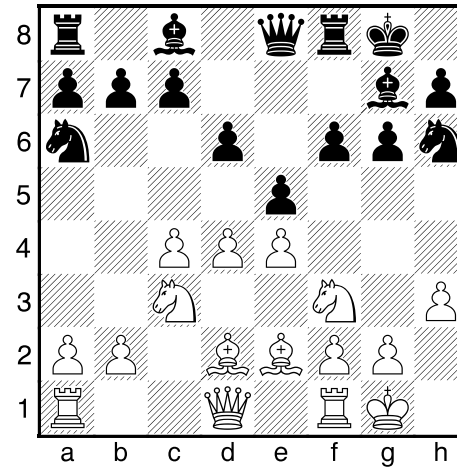
9.♙g5 f6

9...♙e8 is the only move mentioned in the Kaufman repertoire.

10.♙d2?!

The weakest of three possible retreats, leaves d4 less well defended, and also doesn't allow the ♙ the chance to go to the long diagonal.

10...♙e8 11.h3 ♘h6



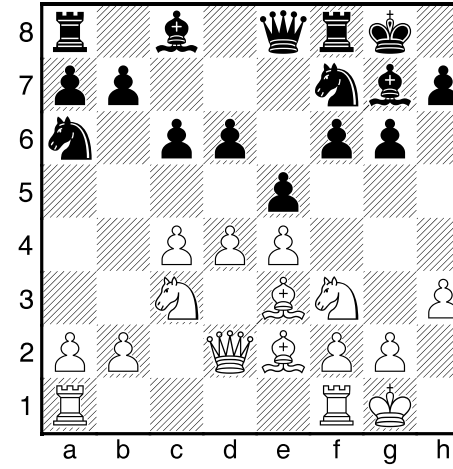
12.♙e3

12.dxe5 dxe5 13.♙c1 ♘f7 14.c5 ♘xc5 15.♘d5 ♘e6 16.♘xc7 ♘xc7 17.♙xc7 ♘d8 18.♙ac1 ♙e6 19.♙c4 ♙f7= Black played ...♙f8, traded ♙s and then doubled ♙s on the d-file for an easy draw in [Lenderman,A](#) (2627)–Kiewra,K (2409) Las Vegas, 2015.

12...c6

It's rarely good for Black to play ...f5 unless the center is closed; e.g. 12...f5?! 13.♙xh6 (13.dxe5 f4!?) 13...♙xh6 14.dxe5 fxe4 15.♙d5+ ♙g7 16.♙xe4 (16.♘xe4 dxe5 17.♙xe5+ ♙xe5 18.♘xe5 ♙e8 19.f4 ♙xf4=) 16...♘c5 17.♙d4 ♘e6 Black has the ♙-pair and some activity, but White's probably better.

13.♙d2 ♘f7



What to do with the ♙s? There have been no pawn captures, so there are no open or half-open files, and even with the e-pawns as the obvious levers it's not clear where the ♙s should go. White has lots of choices, and I picked the simplest one.

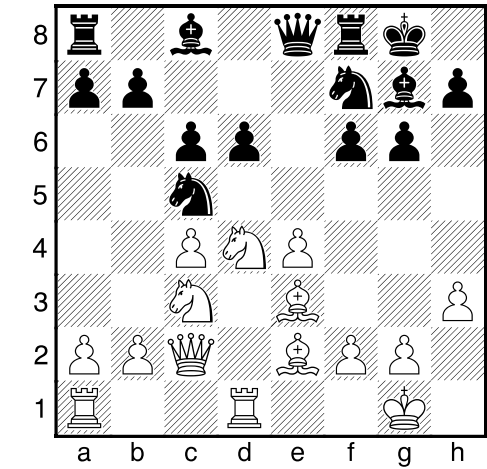
14.♙fd1

14.♙fe1 is sensible, but somehow felt slow with all the minors in front of it.

14.♙ab1?! playing for queenside expansion might be slow after 14...f5!;

14.♘h2!? aiming for f2–f4.

14...exd4 15.♘xd4 ♘c5 16.♙c2



16...a5

Supporting the ♘, but giving White the chance to force through c4–c5, even at the temporary cost of a pawn.

Leela's first line is amazing: 16...♙e7 17.b4 ♘e6 18.♘b3 and now a series of pawn sacs: 18...a5! 19.♘xa5?! (19.bxa5 ♘c5±) 19...f5! 20.exf5 ♘eg5 21.fxg6 ♘xh3+!!± and KID-lovers can enjoy working out the rest. Perhaps a good reminder why ♙fe1 and ♙f1 are so often played in these positions... and why you shouldn't trust anyone who says computers are materialistic.

17.♘b3!

I'd seen this in some Saemisch lines (♘g1–e2–c1–b3) and in both

cases it challenges Black's only well-placed minor piece.

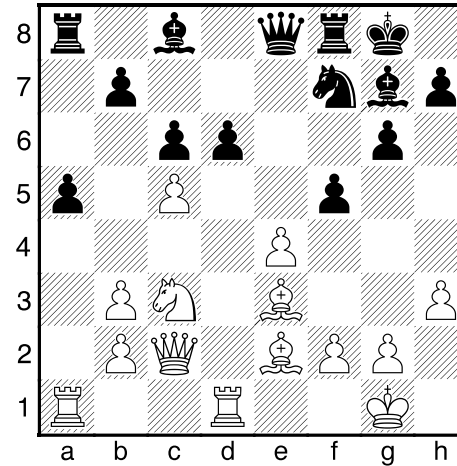
17...♘xb3?

Activates my ♖a1 and allows me to push c5. As far as I can tell, this is Black's only clear mistake of the game, but it's fatal. Black should probably try to clog with ...b6.

17...♘e6 18.c5 this was the point of ♘b3 18...a4 (18...♘xc5 19.♘xc5 dxc5 20.♙xc5 wins the exchange thanks to ...♘f7 and ...♙e8.) 19.♘d2 ♘xc5 20.♘c4± and there's no way Black can

hold d6, after which the center is open and White is much better developed.

18.axb3 f5 19.c5!



19...f4!?

Black had a long think here, but there are no good options: taking c5 drops the

exchange, and pushing ...d5 drops a pawn and the center while leaving White's ♔ much safer. Neural nets rate the position after c5 as +2.

20.♙xf4 dxc5 21.♘a4! ♘e5

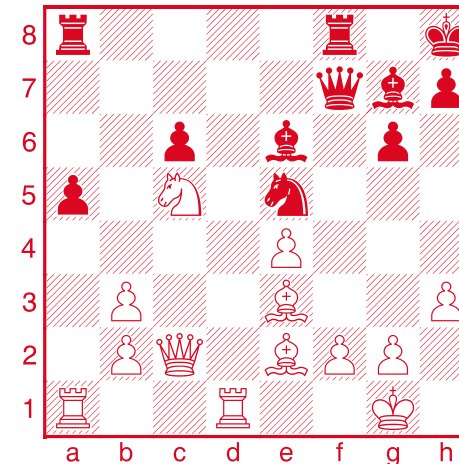
22.♙e3 ♔h8 23.♘xc5
♠23.♘b6 ♖b8 24.♙xc5+- with a bind, safer ♔, and mobile center pawns.

23...♙e6

23...b6 24.♘a4 solves nothing, so Black jettisons a pawn to finish developing.

24.♘xb7 ♖f7 25.♘c5

What an outpost! White's threatening f2-f4, when ...♙h6 fails to ♖c3!



What happens on 25... ♙xh6!?

25...♙h6!?

KID players... always need to sac when their positional weakness become too much :)

26.♙d4!

Keeping control.

I'd lost to too many KIDs to go for this: 26.♙xh6!+- ♖xf2+ but it wins if White plays accurately:

27.♔h2? ♖f3!! 28.♘xe6 ♘g4+ 29.hxg4 ♖h4+= with a perp;

27.♔h1□ 27...♙xh3 28.gxh3□ ♖f3 29.♖d3! (29.♙xf3 ♖xc2 and the extra pieces should win, but anything might happen in a rapid game.) 29...♖xd3 (29...♖af8 30.♖c3!+- hitting e5 and f3.) 30.♘xd3 ♖h4 31.♙f4+-.

26...♙g7 27.♘xe6

♠27.♖c3 ♖ae8 28.♙xe5 ♖xf2+ 29.♔h2+-.

27...♖xe6 28.♖c3 ♖ab8

29.♙c4 ♖e7



RACC Sunday Rapid

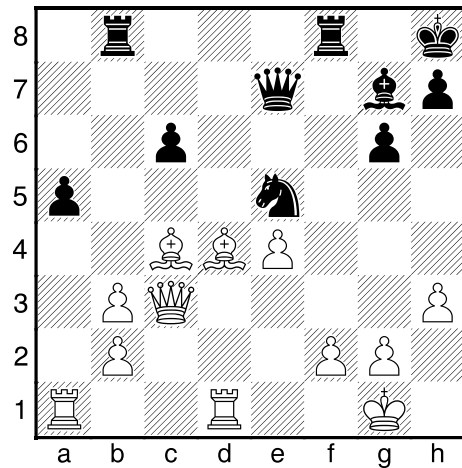
David Cummings vs David Gordon



Chess Canada
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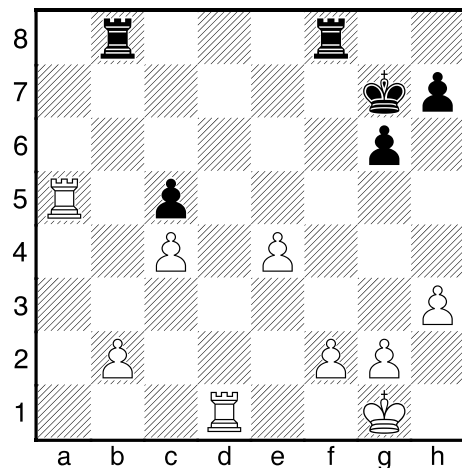


Chess Canada Embiggened



Now it's all exchanges down to a winning endgame.

30.♖xa5 ♘xc4 31.bxc4 c5
32.♙xg7+ ♚xg7 33.♚xg7+
♙xg7



It's an easily won rook ending so long as Black can't activate his ♖s, so White plays safe and slow.

34.♖d2! ♖fe8 35.f3 ♖e5
36.♙f2 ♖b4 37.♖c2 ♙f6
38.♖b5 ♖a4 39.b3 ♖a6 40.b4
♖a8 41.♖xc5 ♖xc5 42.bxc5
♖c8 43.♙e3 ♖xc5 44.♙d4
♖a5 45.c5

1-0

SUMMARY

Not a bad game, and moves 16–19 are a good demo of White's chances. Not a real test of the REP, since White deliberately deviated, but the fact that the Petrosian System gives Black this degree of flexibility is worth noting: White has more work to do, though maybe no more than Black.

- +0 REP
- The c4–c5 temporary pawn sac was key.
- Black always has tactical chances in these KIDs (move 26).

Zach Dukic
U of Ottawa undergrad
2018 CUCC organizer

Upper, John (2112) Dukic, Zachary (2243) E92

RACC Ch Ottawa (6), 22.02.2018

Notes: John Upper

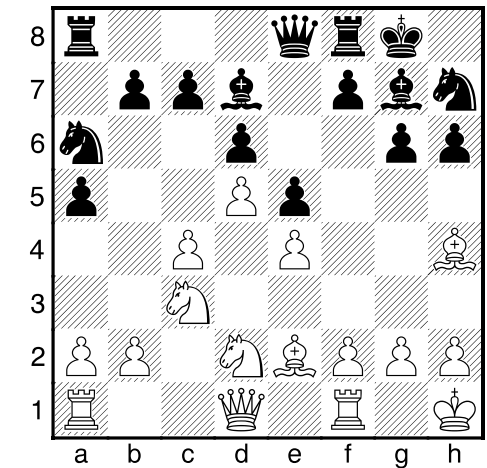
The following game was from the penultimate round of the 2018 RACC Championship. I was tied for the lead and my opponent was ½ point behind, and so felt he needed to play for a win.

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3
♙g7 4.d4 0-0 5.e4 d6 6.♙e2
e5 7.d5 a5 8.♙g5 h6 9.♙h4
♘a6 10.♘d2 ♚e8 11.0-0 ♙d7
12.♙h1

12.b3 is the DC REP move, as in the game vs Xu (below), but here I got carried away with a silly brainstorm...



12...♘h7



13.g4?!

Now ...f5 allows exchanges which leave me with a ♘ outpost on e4. Aren't I clever!

♙13.f3 h5 14.♘b3 b6 15.♘c1
♙h6 16.♘d3 ♙e3 17.♖e1 ♘c5
18.♙f1 ½-½ [Petrosian, T–Hort, V](#)
Lugano, 1968.

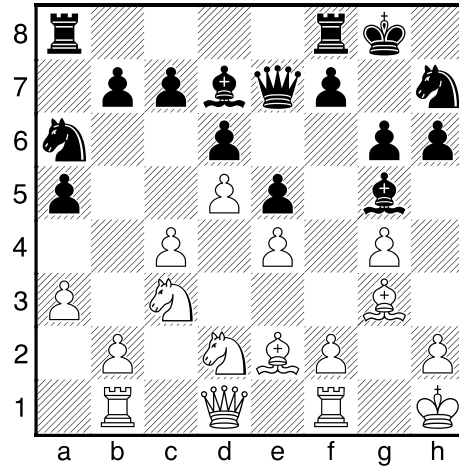
♙13.a3 h5 14.f3 ♙h6 15.b3 ♙e3
16.♖b1 f5 17.exf5 gxf5 18.b4
axb4 19.axb4 ♙h8 20.♙d3 ♚g6
21.♚e2 ♚h6 22.♖fd1 ♖ae8
23.♚e1 ♖g8 24.♘f1 ♙g5∞
(½-½, 42) [Topalov, V](#) (2780)–
[Mamedyarov, S](#) (2760) Wijk aan
Zee, 2008.

13...♙f6!

So much for "clever". Black just

plays a different plan: trade or improve the DSB.

14.♔g3 ♔e7 15.a3 ♔g5
16.♖b1?!



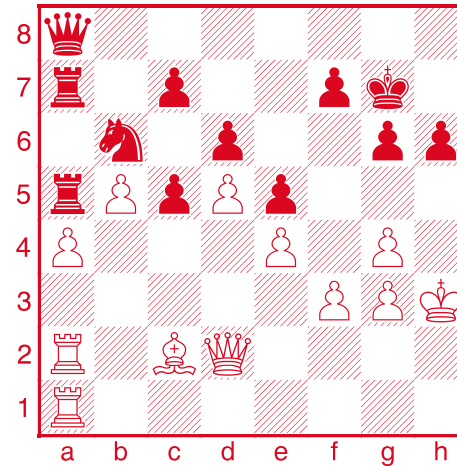
If White wants any queenside pressure then he has to go b3 here, preventing Black's next. I knew this, but my disappointment that 13.g4 was just weak left me doubting my form, and I thought the position with the white pawn on a4 would be a safe hold. That's probably true, but with so little resilience, maybe White should stick with tic-tac-toe rather than chess?

16...a4 17.b4 axb3 18.♗xb3
b6 19.a4 ♗c5 20.♗xc5 bxc5
21.♔d3 ♖a7 22.♗b5?! ♔xb5
23.cxb5 ♖fa8 24.♖a1 ♖a5

25.f3 ♔h4!

Before ♔e1 allows the a-pawn to advance.

26.♔c2 ♗f8 27.♖d2 ♔g7
28.♔g2 ♗d7 29.♖fb1 ♗b6
30.♖a2 ♖8a7 31.♖ba1 ♖d8
32.♔h3 ♔xg3 33.hxg3 ♖a8



Black has maximum pressure on a4, and can also play ...♖xb5.

34.♔d1??

Defends a2 laterally to stop ...♖xb5, and sets a "trap" which doesn't work.

White has more than one way to hold the queenside, but they depend on switching play to the kingside.

34.♔b3 is simplest. Now 34...♗xa4 doesn't lose, but

White has full counterplay after 35.f4! ♗c3 (35...f6 36.fxe5 fxe5 37.♖f1+- and Black's ♔ misses his army.) 36.♖xc3 ♖xa2 37.♖xa2 ♖xa2 38.♔xa2 ♖xa2 39.fxe5∞.

34.♔g2!? is a tricky move, setting up tactics on the h-file:
34...♖xb5 35.♖h1 g5 36.f4↑;

34...♗xa4? 35.f4!± (35.♖a3?! ♗c3 36.♖xa5 ♖xa5 37.♖h1±) 35...♗c3 36.♖xa5 ♖xa5 37.♖xa5 ♖xa5 38.fxe5 dxe5 39.b6!!+- turns the d-pawn into a winning passer.

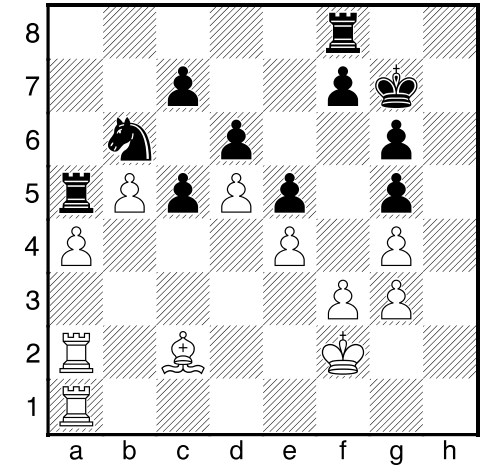
34...♖d8?

34...♗xa4! 35.♔b3 was the trappy idea which stopped Black taking on a4, but here 35...♗c3+- unpins and blocks the ♖ attack on a5. I'd seen this, but overlooked that I can't play ♖x♗ without undefending on a2.

35.♔g2 ♖a8

After all that build up, Black goes back to fishing on the kingside.

36.♔b3 ♖g5 37.♖xg5 hxg5
38.♔f2 ♖h8 39.♔g2 ♖ha8
40.♔f2 ♖f8 41.♔c2



41...f5! 42.gxf5 gxf5 43.♖h1
fxe4 44.♔xe4 ♖h8! 45.♖xh8
♔xh8

Black wins the d-pawn or the a-pawn, but White's rook gets active.

46.♖a1 ♖xa4 47.♖h1+ ♔g8
48.♖h5 g4 49.♖g5+ ♔f7
50.♖xg4 ♗c4 51.♖h4= ♖a2+
52.♔e1 ♖b2 53.♖h7+ ♔f6
54.♖xc7 ♖xb5
54...♗a3!=.

55.♔d3± ♖b4 56.♖d7 e4!

Forcing White to make a tough choice in time trouble.

57.♔xc4!?

57.♔xe4 ♖b3 I didn't see how to make progress.

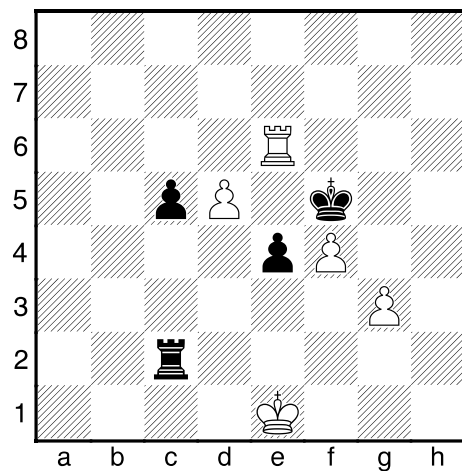
57...♖xc4 58.f4 ♔f5 59.♖xd6





Chess Canada Embiggened

♖c2 60.♖e6



All that work comes down to a ♖ ending in mutual time-trouble, and neither side is up to the challenge...

60...♖c4?? 61.♔e2??

61.♖e5+- transposes to the game.

61...♖c2+! 62.♔d1 ♖c4??
62...♖g2=.

63.♖e5+!+- ♔g4 64.♔e2
♖c2+

64...♔xg3 65.♔e3□+-.

65.♔e3 ♖c3+ 66.♔xe4

66.♔xe4 ♖c4+ (66...♔xg3

67.♖g5+ ♔f2 68.d6+-) 67.♔e3

♖c3+ 68.♔e2 ♖c4 69.♖g5+ ♔h3

70.f5+-.

1-0

SUMMARY

White deviated from the DC REP and Black strategically out-played White after move 13; both players miscalculated what should have been a winning tactic for Black. The game was ultimately decided in a rook ending in mutual time-trouble.

- +0 REP
- strategic oversights (like allowing Black's DSB to regroup) trump opening prep... or is that *part* of opening prep?
- Tactics trump prep.
- Time trouble triggers terrible tactics.

Upper, John (2174) Xu, Daniel (2089)

E92

RACC RR Ottawa (3), 04.04.2019

Notes: John Upper

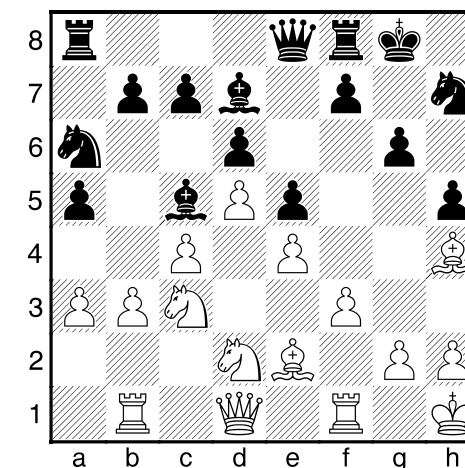
After the previous near fiasco, I reviewed the KID Petrosian mainlines in DC. My opponent in this game went on to win the 2019 CYCC U14 Championship three months later.

1.c4 ♘f6 2.♘c3 g6 3.e4 d6
4.d4 ♖g7 5.♘f3 0-0 6.♖e2 e5
7.d5 a5 8.♖g5 h6 9.♖h4 ♕e8
10.♘d2 ♘a6 11.0-0 ♘h7
12.a3 ♖d7 13.b3 h5 14.f3

♖h6 15.♖b1

15.♖f2 prevents the ♖h6 relocation, but frees the Black ♔ to start kingside play with 15...♔e7.

15...♖e3+ 16.♔h1 ♖c5



All theory so far, which says something about my opponent too... but now I play...

17.♘b5!?

DC has this: 17.♔c1! guarding a3 and preparing ♘a2 and b3-b4, saying "We have reached the main line of the main line Petrosian System..." - DC.

DC covers three Black tries here: 17... f5, 17...c6, and 17...♔h8 in about three pages of analysis.



The enemy of my enemy?
Daniel Xu and Zach Dukic.



So, despite my efforts, I get to move 16 and *still* fail to reach the main main line. :P

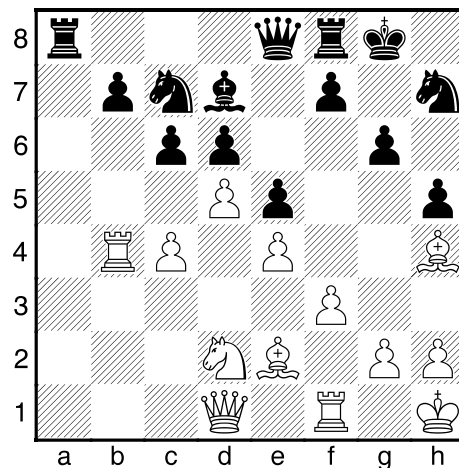
17...c6 18.b4!

A pawn sac for initiative and enough pressure to get it back. Although this is a different pawn sac than the c4–c5 vs Cummings, the idea is similar: White has a space advantage on the queenside and uses a pawn sac to open more lines, in this case for the majors.

18...axb4 19.axb4 ♖xb4 20.♘c7

20.♖xb4!? cxb5 21.♖b2 b4 22.♙b3!? hoping to zigzag into b6.

20...♘xc7 21.♖xb4



21...b5 22.dxc6

22.cxb5 c5 23.♖b2 ♘xb5 24.♘c4 g5! 25.♙f2∞.

22...♙xc6 23.cxb5

23.♙c1!? ♖a4 24.♖b1 b4 25.c5 d5∞;

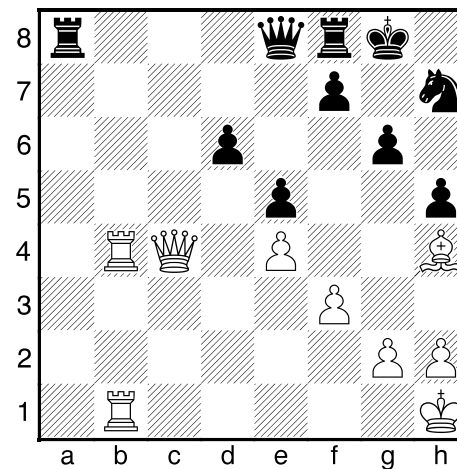
23.♙b1 ♘a6 24.♖xb5!?

♙xb5 25.cxb5 ♖b8 (25...♘c5 26.♘c4±) 26.♙d3 (♙26.b6) 26...♘c5 27.♙xd6 ♙d7! I didn't see an advantage here.

23...♘xb5 24.♘c4 ♘c3 25.♙d2 ♘xe2 26.♙xe2 ♙b5 27.♖fb1 ♙xc4

27...♖b8?? 28.♙b2+.

28.♙xc4



A position I saw at move 18. White's majors are better coordinated, and Black's

kingside dark squares could be weak if his pawns advance.

28...g5! 29.♙e1 ♖c8 30.♙d3 ♙d7 31.h4!?

Gumptiony ☺.

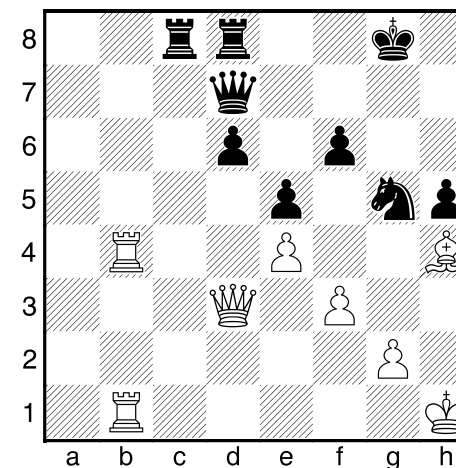
31...♖fd8

31...g4 32.f4 exf4 33.♙d2↗.

32.hxg5 ♘xg5 33.♙h4

33.♖b7 ♖c7 34.♙a5 ♖xb7 35.♖xb7 ♙xb7 36.♙xd8 ♘e6 37.♙xd6 and Black draws with 37...♙c8! 38.♙h4 (38.♙f6?? ♙c1+ 39.♙h2 ♙f4+-) 38...♙c5=.

33...f6

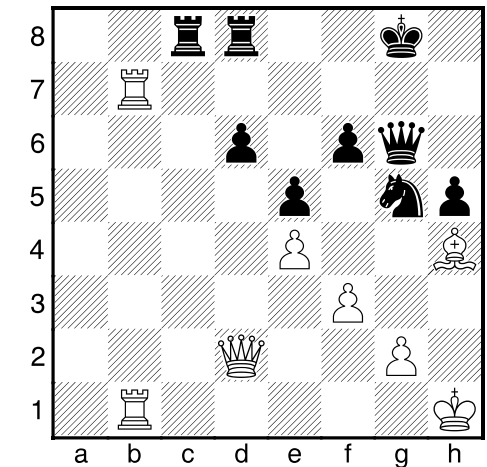


I thought I was winning here, but I couldn't find it.

34.♙d2!± ♙g7!

I was worried about 34...♘xf3!? because Black is OK after 35.gxf3? ♙h3+ 36.♙h2 ♙xf3+ 37.♙g2+ ♙xg2+ 38.♙xg2 ♙f7∞. But OTB I missed the in-between move 35.♙d5+! which destroys Black's coordination: 35...♙g7 36.♖b7 ♘xh4 37.♙xd6! ♖c1+♙ 38.♖xc1 ♙xb7 39.♖c7+±.

35.♖b7 ♙g6



36.♖a7?!

♙36.♖1b6 ties Black down, as now 36...d5?! runs into 37.exd5 ♖c2 38.♖xf6!+- or even ♙xg5!?

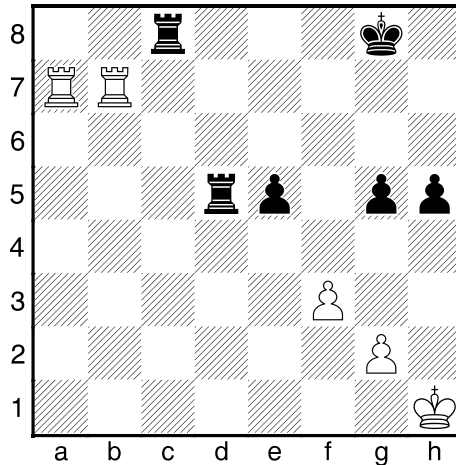
36...d5!= 37.♙xg5

37.♖b6 dxe4 38.♙xg5♙ ♙xg5 39.♙xg5 fxe5=.

37...♙xg5 38.♙xg5+

38. ♖a2 ♜c1+=.

38...fxg5 39.exd5 ♜xd5
40. ♜bb7=



White still has activity for the pawn, but it's only enough to draw. I forced him to play out another 30 moves, but it turned out that he knew how to draw the drawn ♖♜p vs ♖♜ endgame.

1/2-1/2

SUMMARY

No blunders and an interestingly complex middlegame; so, not such a bad game.

- +1 REP, good complex position, even if I deviated first.
- Make sure you can draw

these drawn Rp endings, just in case.

- Kids today and their opening prep... am I right?

Conclusion(s)?

Having done all that work is it time to sum the plusses and minuses and give a score? Or do you think a plus/minus score is a silly oversimplification?*

Note how *often I tried but failed to follow the DC REP*. Maybe my bad study habits and deteriorating wetware were more challenged by DC than by the more formidable, but less flexible Kaufman Reptertorie (NiC, 2012), where White aims for d4/c4/Nc3 (without g3) and so restricts Black's options a bit more, albeit at the cost of allowing the Nimzo and Grunfeld and Semi-Slav. OTOH I was younger more hopeful when I tried to learn Kaufman...

This review also shows *how often games were affected by my prior knowledge of other openings and middlegames* (see: Russian System vs Grunfeld; anti-Meran vs Beckwith; QGA 'get the B-pair' vs Huang; Reversed Taimanovs; plus all early deviations). Maybe that's obvious — what you learn mixes with what you already know — but it will affect whether this book helps your results. I think a player with a wider range of middle-game experience would benefit more from this REP than someone with less. The book can help guide an experienced player to stitch together the setups they like while steering away from those they do not. It *might* be tried by less experienced players to force them into middlegames they do not (yet) know; this might have a good long-term effect, but would hurt results in the short-term.

Finally, I think this review most clearly shows *how little difference an opening book makes to game results at my level*:

- a few games were decided in the opening (Internet Junk);
- almost all of the games were decided by *tactical errors* or *time trouble* or both.

This is hardly a strike against *the English*, or any opening book, but a sign that my results might improve more by practicing tactics and developing more physical and mental endurance than by an equal effort at opening study.

When following the DC REP I always got playable positions, and sometimes even objective advantages against less well prepared opponents. Turning those positions into wins is another story, and maybe *not* another book.

- John Upper

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* If not: +9 -1 = +8 = "Buy this book!"

